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Chief academic officers in New England community colleges : leadership and regional collaboration.

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CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS IN NEW ENGLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGES: LEADERSHIP AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

A Dissertation Presented

by

PAMELA R. EDINGTON

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DEDICATION

For Claire and Billie

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Just as it takes "a village to raise a child," my experience is that it takes a crowd to complete a dissertation. This dissertation was made possible through the contributions of a host of individuals and institutions. I am forever in debt to them for their assistance and support.

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ABSTRACT

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS IN NEW ENGLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGES: LEADERSHIP AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

MAY 2006

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Warnings of an impending leadership crisis in community colleges are raising interest in the role of chief academic officer (CAO). Despite the centrality of the position, the CAO is largely neglected in the academic research literature. Information from CAOs about their perceptions and experiences as leaders is needed to create and develop supports for their expanding leadership role. Factors that affect collaboration among CAOs must be identified to determine the extent to which CAOs are interested and able to collaborate to solve common problems. This qualitative study ultimately probes the potential benefit of developing a network of chief academic officers in community colleges to confront and resolve shared challenges and opportunities, particularly at the regional level.

CAOs serving in 40 public community colleges in the six New England states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont were sent an original written survey probing their views of CAO leadership, collaboration and

demographic characteristics. Twenty-five surveys were completed and returned for a response rate of 62.5%. Five CAOs, selected by geography, size of institution, and views on collaboration were selected for hour-long interviews to explore in depth their survey answers.

The study findings indicate that the CAO is a critical leadership role in New England community colleges faced with expanding demands and shrinking resources. CAOs are also active collaborators who value the knowledge and experience of their peers in formulating responses to common problems. A model of collaboration as a function of engagement and concerns is used to clarify collaboration among CAOs. The model suggests that collaboration reaches its full potential when engagement between CAOs becomes more personal and there is recognition of mutual concerns. Collaboration among CAOs could be facilitated by providing additional time and resources to support communication and travel. A higher percentage of CAOs in New England are female, white, slightly older, and have served, on average, fewer years in their position when compared with national studies. Recommendations for supporting collaboration among CAOs, especially within geographic regions, are presented, along with a call for more research on the role of the CAO in community colleges.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

At the onset of the 21st century, community colleges are a substantial and indispensable element of the post-secondary education system in the United States. By sheer numbers alone, community colleges are a significant force in higher education. Beginning with a single institution in Joliet, Illinois in 1901, there is now at least one community college in every state and more than 1200 institutions in the entire country. Community colleges enroll half of all students who begin college in the United States and educate more than 11 million credit and non-credit students, including 80,000 international students (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Given their extensive presence in post-secondary education, ensuring that community colleges provide a first-rate education for students is a critical issue.

Effective leadership is recognized as a critical key factor in the development and staying power of community colleges. The impressive expansion of community colleges has been largely attributed to the leadership skills and behaviors of founding presidents (Amey & Twombly, 1992). The first generation of chief executives faced a special set of dilemmas in establishing a new educational institution in an already well-developed system of post-secondary education in the United States. Their vision of expanding access to higher education, coupled with dogged determination and resilience, resulted in a uniquely American institution. As a result of the importance attributed to their role in building and sustaining a robust system of community colleges

in the United States, the role of the community college president has monopolized the attention of academic researchers.

At this juncture in their history, community colleges are facing a daunting set of "monumental challenges", according to the President of the American Association of Community Colleges, George Boggs (Chronicle, 2004). Community colleges are experiencing exponential growth in demand for educational services, increasing diversity in the student body, the integration of sophisticated instructional and administrative technology, a continuing and growing reliance on adjunct workers, new teaching and learning models, and exacting accountability measures. While community colleges take pride in their agility to respond quickly to new realities, the breadth and pace of change is challenging traditional systems.

Concurrent with the pressing external challenges is an equally significant shift within community colleges themselves. National surveys of community college personnel indicate that close to fifty percent of presidents are planning to retire by 2007. The growing alarm over an "impending leadership crisis" in community colleges has heightened interest in identifying and preparing the next generation of community college leaders (Shults, 2001). Leadership programs and institutes designed to cultivate aspiring academic administrators are now widely available to community college personnel.

The new leadership programs recognize that community colleges will need effective leadership throughout the organization, not just in the presidential office, in order to meet current and emerging challenges. The idea that a single leader at the helm of the educational ship can select, steer, and stay the course is no longer plausible or

desirable. In the present context, presidential leadership alone is unlikely to sustain community colleges.

There is, therefore, a need for both new leaders and new leadership strategies in community colleges. Baker and Associates (1992) suggest "the leadership strategies, organizational cultures, and processes by which organizations achieve their goals that were appropriate and effective in an era of growth and relative prosperity have become anachronistic in today's environment of rapid change, declining resources and seemingly diminished options." The number and complexity of issues at work in higher education requires that others in the college display leadership as well. Academic leaders are being urged to look to new organizational models and innovative strategies to address the intractable set of complex challenges facing their institutions (Martin & Samels, 1997).

Chief Academic Officers

One obvious place to look for leadership beyond the President is the Chief Academic Officer (CAO). There are a variety of titles associated with the CAO position, including Vice President of Academic Affairs, Provost, Dean of Instruction, and Vice President of Learning. Regardless of the title, the chief academic officer of a community college is recognized as a senior administrator, a direct report to the president, with responsibility for the overall instructional program of the college. The chief academic officer position in community colleges is a critical leadership role. The position is important due to its oversight of the core instructional mission of the community college. On many campuses, the chief academic officer, is identified as having as great – or even greater – effect on the campus than the president (Birnbaum,

1992, p. 113). The CAO has "strong potential to guide an institution toward a clearer mission, an improved environment for teaching and learning, and a healthy climate for positive change (Lambert, 2002)."

Due to the centrality of their responsibilities to the community college mission of student learning, a chief academic officer is by function one of the most important positions in the institution. While a chief executive officer may lead on the fundraising and political front, a chief financial officer may lead on cost savings and efficiencies; it is the chief academic officer, who is at the center of the development and implementation of innovative solutions to meet student-learning needs. According to George B. Vaughan (1990), a respected scholar on the American community college, "to have an outstanding community college, one must have an outstanding dean of instruction."

The CAO position is also noteworthy because it generates the most candidates for vacant community college presidencies. One-third of presidents at 2-year institutions in 2001 held the CAO position prior to accepting the chief executive office (ACE, 2002). No other role within community colleges leads more directly to the presidency than the chief academic officer position does. Identified as the "pathway to the presidency", the chief academic officer is often a training ground for the critical chief executive position within community colleges (Vaughan, 1990).

Although chief academic officers of community colleges are nominally some of the most influential academic leaders in American higher education, the CAO position has been the subject of limited published research (Vaughan, 1990; Anderson, 2002). The majority of research studies about community college leaders have been narrowly

focused on the experiences, careers, priorities, relationships and leadership styles of the chief executive officer (Amey *et al.*, 2002). Pierce and Pedersen (1997) identified more than 150 such studies on community college presidents between 1989 and 1995 alone. Because formal investigation of other senior administrative roles in community colleges is scarce, there is a substantial void in our understanding of how other individuals and roles within community colleges influence and shape institutions (Vaughan, 1986, 1989, 1990).

There is a lack of formal study of chief academic officers in community colleges, in spite of the fact that "the chief academic officer's role is vital to effective institutional functioning...and deserves equal scrutiny (Lambert, 2002)." Although chief academic officers in community colleges identify "leader" as their primary role within their institutions, there has been relatively little research focused on the CAO position (Anderson, 2002). Additional research on the chief academic officer is needed to assist community colleges in cultivating and strengthening leadership throughout their institutions.

Leadership Strategies

The history of leadership studies is one of moving from a narrow focus on individuals to increasingly looking at leadership from a wider, more comprehensive lens that extends to teams.

In addition to understanding the traits and behaviors that distinguish the individual leader, there is now much more interest in understanding leadership as a "collaborative endeavor" (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Teams are thought to be advantageous in a highly complex environment in which it is difficult, if not impossible,

for one person to single-handedly grasp the entirety of the situation. Groups of people working together may be more effective working on tasks or problems that are vast and complicated. Multiple, diverse perspectives can lead to more creative problem solving. Wide participation in decision-making encourages mutual support and buy-in for subsequent action (Eisenstat and Cohen, 1990; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993.) The research agenda related to teams and collaboration has largely focused on their formation and use within organizations. In theory, teams of people working together across institutional lines could add the same types of value attributed to team leadership within organizations.

There is growing interest in identifying leadership strategies that will work across institutions. Organizations like the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) have been working for decades to nurture partnerships between education, industry and government sectors in order to promote educational opportunity and economic development within the region. Stevenson (Ed. Vol. 114,No.3) also recognizes that the college campus now extends into the community, economy, and global market place and recommends "cultivating systemic leadership" to facilitate collaboration between sectors and other learning communities. Martin and Samels (1997) suggest the use of strategic alliances and regional networks "to shape a collective response" to external forces affecting institutions of higher education. The president of a large, entrepreneurial community college expresses a similar call to collaboration, in suggesting that "competition among institutions and a constantly changing student market demand creative new methods of cooperation" (Cowan, 2004).

If cooperation between institutions is necessary to address the current challenges facing community colleges, it is essential to explore the extent to which academic administrators are working, or are interested in working, with others to achieve shared goals. To that end, in addition to looking to the chief academic officer for leadership, it may also be necessary to expand on the strategies available to CAOs to address complex and systemic problems in higher education. The extent to which teams of chief academic officers are working together, or are interested in working together, across institutional and state-lines to solve common problems has not been explored in the research literature.

Regional Perspective

Geographic regions in the United States share significant commonalities that bear on the social forces affecting individual states and individual higher education institutions within them. Tradition, culture, climate, economy, and politics, are often distinguishing features between regions. Any or all of these factors can have important ramifications for educational institutions.

Within a geographic region, community colleges typically share a political, economic and social context that requires targeted strategies to facilitate the community college mission. As an example, different regions of the United States are experiencing different types of population growth and mobility. The New England region, while losing population overall, nevertheless has an expanding immigrant base. Since immigrants are often attracted to community colleges for access and cost issues, New England colleges have a growing concern with meeting the expanding need for English as a second language curriculum and teachers. Widening one's perspective to the

regional level could enable leaders to identify and assess new strategies for solving vexing structural dilemmas.

Students in community colleges are most often attending their local community college, a neighboring college, or one in an adjacent state with a tuition exchange compact. Close proximity, especially in small geographic regions, suggests that student access to post-secondary education is facilitated by cooperation between community colleges in a region.

Higher education accrediting organizations, which establish and enforce common standards of assessment and accountability for post-secondary institutions, are arranged on a regional basis in the United States. Although regional standards are similar, there are regional distinctions that academic leaders need to be cognizant of as they build and assess quality programs. The specific priorities and values of the local accrediting agency are of particular importance to educational institutions within the affected region. There is a shared concern by community colleges within a region about the setting and enforcing of collective standards for effective educational practice by their common accrediting agency.

The extent to which chief academic officers may be in a position to facilitate and leverage intra-regional cooperation is not known. There is an absence of published research about the extent to which chief academic officers are involved in or are interested in exploring the merits of collaboration strategies.

Research results on community colleges are most frequently reported on a national basis (Amey, VanDerLinden, Brown, 2002; McKenney & Cejda, 2002; Vaughan, 1990) or by individual states (Parker,1985). Research studies infrequently

compare results on a regional basis. The national research reported by regions in Anderson's (2002) examination of managerial roles of chief academic officers is a notable exception. An American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) *Research Brief on The Institutional Context of Community College Administration* (2002) is similarly exceptional. Important regional differences between community colleges may be obscured as a result of this pattern of reporting only at state and national levels.

To date the perspective of chief academic officers about the value and potential of institutional collaboration, particularly within geographic regions is missing from the research record. The extent to which chief academic officers in community colleges share a regional perspective, or are prepared to act on it is unknown. Information about the extent and quality of current relationships among CAOs in community colleges within regions is not available. Identifying the most effective means to encourage a network of chief academic leaders is an essential first step to building linkages among community colleges within a geographic region.

Statement of the Problem

There is a pressing need to expand leadership capacity in community colleges beyond the chief executive officer and a need to develop additional leadership strategies to respond to current challenges facing community colleges. Research on leadership roles in community colleges has been largely limited to chief executive officers and to traditional forms of leadership strategies. This study is designed to help fill the research breach by examining chief academic officers as campus leaders and by exploring their

views and experiences with collaboration as a means of addressing significant problems within a geographic region.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this descriptive and exploratory study is to address gaps in knowledge about the chief academic officer role in the community college. This research surveys chief academic officers serving in public community colleges in the New England region for their views and experiences as leaders and as collaborators with their peers. A purposeful sample of chief academic officers responding to a survey is interviewed to elicit additional information and insight into the two themes of leadership and collaboration. The potential for chief academic officers within the New England region to work together as community college leaders on mutual challenges is assessed on the basis of the chief academic officers' responses.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. How do CAOs view their role as academic leaders in community colleges?
2. What are the views of chief academic officers with respect to collaboration with other chief academic officers?
3. What are the experiences of chief academic offices with respect to collaboration with other chief academic officers?
4. What factors facilitate or inhibit collaboration among chief academic officers in New England community colleges?
5. Do chief academic officers see increased collaboration as likely for the region?

6. What is the profile of chief academic officers in public community colleges in the New England region?

Significance of the Study

Community colleges are facing important challenges and are at a crossroads. The manner in which leaders respond to the challenges may define community colleges for years. Expanding our understanding of leadership roles beyond the position of president is important to the effective operation of community colleges.

The chief academic officer role is one of the most challenging and demanding leadership positions in academe. Despite its significance for advancing the critical central mission of teaching and learning in the academy, researchers have tended to give it short shrift in favor of studies of chief executive officers. It is essential that the knowledge base on chief academic officers expand. This study will add to the base by exploring the perspective of chief academic officers on their role as leaders in community colleges.

The chief academic officer position in community colleges is a single position without an internal peer group. This research investigating linkages between CAOs, within a geographic region, could result in better practices, more innovation, increased efficiencies, and better policy making. The extent to which CAOs create linkages with their peers across institutions can be significant for personal, professional, and institutional development. Whether strategic alliances within regions are a reasonable and useful direction for community colleges to take at this juncture in their development may depend on the beliefs and actions of chief academic officers.

Knowledge gained from this study can provide guidance to individuals aspiring to the chief academic officer position and direction to programs preparing community college administrators. It can also provide information and support to chief academic officers in community colleges who value regional collaboration as a strategy for solving significant shared problems or opportunities, as well as provide direction to organizations whose purpose is to further collaboration among educational institutions.

Delimitations and Limitations

1. This is a study of a single geographic region. The data is limited to the New England region of the United States. Studying additional regions could yield different or contradictory results.
2. The study is limited to public community colleges accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).
3. The study builds on the research of Anderson (2002), Vaughan (1990) and Birnbaum (1992) and assumes the reliability and validity of their results for comparison purposes.
4. This study is dependent upon the level of participation of CAOs in the region.
5. Only the perspectives of CAOs are investigated.

Definitions

Chief Academic Officer: The senior administrator with responsibility for the overall instructional program and academic affairs of the institution. Typically the chief academic officer reports directly to the president and is one of the highest-ranking administrative officers of the community college. Other typical titles for this role

include, but are not limited to, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Instruction or Learning, Provost, and Dean of Academic Affairs.

Collaboration: The act of working with others to solve problems.

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education: (CIHE) A unit of NEASC that limits its activities to those colleges and universities which offer programs leading to the bachelor's or higher degrees or institutions which award only the associate's degree but include in their offerings degree programs in the liberal arts or general studies.

Community College: Educational institutions that offer programs leading to an associate's degree, and include in their offerings degree programs in the liberal arts or general studies.

New England Region: The geographic area in the eastern United States that includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

New England Board of Higher Education: (NEBHE) A nonprofit, congressionally authorized, interstate agency whose mission is to promote greater educational opportunities and services for the residents of New England. The New England Higher Education Compact, a 1955 agreement among the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont, established NEBHE.

New England Association of Schools and Colleges; (NEASC) A regional accreditation agency that sets standards for educational institutions. Postsecondary institutions achieve accreditation through meeting standards.

Strategic alliance: Collaborative efforts between institutions that retain autonomous individual administration and governance structures.

Summary

Community colleges have an extensive and critical presence in post-secondary education in the United States at the outset of the 21st century. Facing new challenges, community colleges are looking to discover the next generation of leaders and to identify new leadership strategies to ensure their continuing contribution. Although the chief academic officer is a critical leadership role, there is limited research focused on the CAO position in community colleges. Given a daunting set of significant issues facing community colleges, there is a need for new leadership strategies, such as collaboration, to ensure the capacity of colleges to achieve their mission of ensuring ready access to high quality academic experiences.

This study explores the views and experiences of chief academic officers as academic leaders, and investigates the CAO perspective on collaboration, within a geographic region, as a strategy for responding to external forces affecting community colleges. The findings will benefit current and future chief academic officers, and other individuals and organizations interested in cultivating leadership and collaboration.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the research literature on community colleges, leadership, chief academic officers, and collaboration in higher education. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used to explore the research questions. Chapter 4 presents the findings and analysis related to the role of chief academic officers in New England community colleges. Chapter 5 presents the findings and analysis related to collaboration by chief academic officers in New England community college. Chapter 6

presents and analyzes the profile of New England community college CAOs. Chapter 7 presents the conclusion, implications, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is a great deal of literature on the broad topics related to this study of leadership and community colleges. There is surprisingly limited literature on the subjects of chief academic officers in community colleges, and the leadership strategy of regional collaboration. There is a vast amount of literature on leadership, in general, and a considerable amount on leadership in higher education, but most of this work is focused on the office of the president, and does not include community colleges in its scope. There is an expanding literature on community colleges, but surprisingly little research based on a national research agenda, and even less on chief academic officers. There is mention of collaboration in the higher education literature and several organizational structures that foster it, but most of the work is narrowly focused on the institutional, state, or national level.

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to community colleges in the United States, with a broad overview of the research and literature on community colleges. It then reviews the literature on leadership, moving from a general overview of leadership theory, to leadership in higher education in particular and then, specifically, to leadership in community colleges. The chapter next focuses on a subset of higher education leaders: the chief academic officers, reviewing first studies on chief academic officers in higher education, and then, chief academic officers in community colleges. The final section in the chapter focuses on collaboration and the role of

regional organizations and associations in developing and fostering working relationships among post secondary institutions in New England.

Community Colleges

Community colleges are "any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). The oldest existing public two-year college in the United States is Joliet Junior College in Illinois, which was founded in 1901. Between 1915 and 1999, the numbers of public and private nonprofit two-year colleges rose from 74 to 1,244 (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 15). According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in 2002 there were 992 public, 148 private, and 31 tribal community colleges in the United States. In the New England states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, there are 44 public community colleges, 20 private institutions, and no tribal colleges (AACC, 2005). Community colleges operate in every state and enroll half of all students who begin college in the United States (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 18). It is estimated that since their inception in 1901, more than 100 million people have attended community colleges (www.aacc.nche.edu).

The development of community colleges in the United States is attributable to several factors, including: a growing demand for access to higher education in the early years of the twentieth century; the desire of university leaders to focus on research by either jettisoning lower-division preparatory work, or accepting only highly qualified students; the aspiration of local officials to have a college in the area to attract employers and households; relatively low cost; and innovative programming.

One hundred years after their development, community colleges are at a crossroads as they face a new set of difficult challenges, including a 14 percent increase in new students from 1992-2002, and a 13 percent decline in annual state appropriations (Chronicle, 2004). An additional challenge for community colleges is the responsibility to train workers for a changing economy; a very public recommendation made by U.S. President George W. Bush in his 2004 State of the Union address.

Finally, recognized as a vital and essential educational institution, with a critical role in economic development, community colleges are scrambling to meet their mandates with shrinking financial and human resources at their disposal. Providing access to higher education, a cornerstone of the community college mission, may now be threatened by the lack of financial resources to support adequate course offerings, faculty positions, and essential services. A potential leadership crisis is threatened by the anticipated retirement of large numbers of chief executive officers, senior administrators, and faculty from community colleges (Shults, 2001). A 2001 study found that more than 79% of community college presidents are planning to retire within 10 years (Weisman and Vaughan, 2002). How community colleges choose to address these challenges, according to George R. Boggs, president of the American Association of Community Colleges, may "define our institutions for years to come (Chronicle, 2004)."

Although community colleges have developed to become a significant force in post-secondary education, they have been largely ignored in formal research about higher education. To date, "there is no generally accepted national research agenda for community colleges, no consistently funded national agency charged with studying the

institutions as unique entities, and few educational researchers directing their attention toward them (Cohen & Brawer, 2003)". Much of the research that is done on community colleges is unpublished theses and dissertations by university faculty and graduate students in departments of education.

Although a formal research agenda that includes community colleges is missing at a national level, there are nevertheless large numbers of articles, research reports, and similar documents on community colleges. In the ten-year period between 1993 and 2003, a search of the ERIC database with the keywords "community college" yielded 16,194 documents. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) also supports and publishes research focused on topics of interest to its member institutions. Research reports investigating community college leadership and chief academic officers is summarized in subsequent sections of the literature review.

Leadership

Leadership, like every other behavioral concept is difficult to define with precision. Bass suggests, "The search for the one…true definition of leadership seems to be fruitless (1991, p.18)." Definitions of leadership are as numerous as the researchers studying it. The definition of leadership tends to vary with the particular facet of the complex topic that the researcher is focused on. Common aspects of leadership are generally recognized as setting a direction, aligning people, motivating and inspiring followers (Lick, 2002). Leadership can be distinguished, albeit with difficulty, from management practices. Kotter (1990) defines management as planning, organizing and controlling in an organization; and leadership as establishing direction, motivating and aligning people.

According to Birnbaum, "since there is not agreement on what leadership is, there can be no agreement on how to study it" (1992, p. 18). There is no shortage of scholarly interest in the topic of leadership but there are differences in research approaches, methods, and samples in the literature on leadership. There is an extensive research base in leadership studies that dates back to the 1900s (Rost, 1991). The *Handbook of Leadership* (Bass, 1981), widely considered the definitive compilation of leadership research since first published by Ralph M. Stogdill in 1948, references more than 5,000 studies. For the 1990 edition, over 7,500 research studies are cited (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). The ever-expanding research on leadership underscores the enduring interest in the topic and demonstrates the importance of multiple perspectives for building a comprehensive and complete understanding of human behavior.

The history of modern leadership theory can be separated into four general approaches - the trait era, the behavioral era, the contingency era, and the relationship era (Nahavandi, 2003). Overall, however, the rapidly changing context in which leaders work is encouraging leadership scholars to recognize the inherent complexity of leadership and to resist simplifying it to a single approach.

Early scientific attempts to describe and explain the phenomenon of leadership involved the identification of the unique characteristics, traits, and abilities that distinguish leaders from others. The idea that leaders were born to their leadership role or that leadership was reducible to a collection of physical and personality traits dominated leadership theory until the mid-1940s (Nahavandi, 2003). Certain traits have been consistently identified as important for leadership, such as intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability (Northouse, 2001), but there is no

solid evidence that leadership is reducible to a select set or combination of traits. Despite its challenges, the trait tradition continues with several modern authors suggesting that certain types of personality traits are associated with respected leaders and with great organizations (Senge, 1990; Maccoby, 1981; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Collins, 2001).

One of the significant shortcomings of trait theory was that it could not explain why certain individuals are successful leaders in one place or circumstance and not in another. Stodgill (1948) was one of the first to widen the research lens to include the importance of situational factors for leadership by suggesting that the environment could have an important influence on the identification of leaders and the exercise of leadership. The interest in the importance of situational factors ushered in an extended research agenda focused on the behaviors of effective leaders. Among the critical contributions of this body of research are the ideas that leadership is a learned behavior, and that primary leadership actions can be distinguished as task-related or relationship-related behaviors (Nahavandi, 2003).

The contingency era began in the 1960s in response to the lack of success of the behavior approach for explaining and predicting effective leadership (Nahavandi, 2003). The major assumptions of the contingency model of leadership are that leadership is learned, it is not reducible to a single set of traits or behaviors, and that an understanding of contextual factors is paramount to effective leadership. Fiedler (1967) and other contingency theorists (Hersey & Blancard, 1993; House, 1971), posit that situational variables affect the ability of leaders to lead and emphasize the influence of context for effective leadership. A major contribution of the contingency-type theories

is the shift in the leadership research agenda from exclusive concern about the sole leader, to a much more holistic perspective that includes the significance of the follower to the practice of leadership.

The "New Leadership" paradigm (Bryman, 1992) has shifted from a narrow focus on how leaders affect followers to look more closely at how leaders and followers affect one another. More recent research on leadership emphasizes the interaction of leaders with followers and the importance of mutual collaboration to accomplishing organizational goals.

The new paradigm traces its lineage to *Leadership*a now seminal text published by James MacGregor Burns in 1974. In it, Burns identifies two ideal types of leaders – the transactional leader and the transformational leader. The transactional leader is familiar and resonates with the majority of previous literature on leadership. The transactional leader bargains with followers to achieve related goals within the existing organizational culture. The transformational leader, on the other hand, unites with followers in a mutual purpose to achieve higher moral values. The needs and wishes of followers become inextricably merged with the transformational leader. The value of transformational leadership is that both followers and the leader realize their mutual potential in the process of the interaction.

The foundational principles of transformational leadership developed by Burns (1974) sparked substantial thinking and research by other leadership scholars (Bass, 1985), Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Tichy and DeVanna (1986). Their collective work produced refinements in the model, created instruments for measuring

transformational leadership, and produced field research testing the value of the approach for understanding organizational behavior.

The shift to looking at leadership as interactive and shared has awakened increased interest in the value of team leadership for accomplishing goals (Kogler Hill, 2001). The focus of this model is the work group set within a social context and the role of leadership for achieving team goals and objectives. Leadership in teams is a "collaborative endeavor" according to Bensimon and Neumann (1993) that is thought to increase the capacity of organizations to learn and adapt to a dynamic environment. A central premise of teamwork is that collaboration among empowered individuals is critical to optimal performance.

The research agenda on teams has largely focused on identifying the criteria and conditions that make teams effective and excellent. Hackman and Walton (1986) identified the conditions necessary for teams to be effective in organizations: 1) A clear and valued goal; 2) A group structure that facilitates problem-solving; 3) Established group norms for performance; and 4) Sufficient material resources. Under the appropriate conditions, teams can maximize their potential for accomplishing goals. The role of leaders with teams is to help ensure that conditions are favorable for teamwork.

Leadership in Higher Education

There is a large literature on leadership in higher education. Most of it proceeds from the assumption that colleges and universities are different from other types of organizations. Academic institutions have been characterized as cybernetic systems composed of patterns of feedback loops and loose coupling (Birnbaum, 1988). The

levers of power that are ostensibly available to leaders in more highly structured and more tightly coupled organizations are absent in academia. The presence of ambiguous and diverse goals, multiple constituencies, a highly professional and autonomous workforce, unclear processes through which inputs are converted to outputs and fluid participation in decision-making are some of the salient factors that distinguish academic organizations (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, and Riley, 1978). As a result of their distinctive features, leadership in the context of higher education needs and has its own research agenda.

Bensimon *et al.*(1989) prepared a comprehensive synthesis of the literature related to leadership and higher education. They point out that research on leadership in higher education has largely followed the same trajectory as leadership studies in general. An early focus examined the traits and behaviors of chief executive officers of colleges and universities in an attempt to identify the optimal set of characteristics and actions most conducive to academic leadership. Later, there was a move to place the president in the context of an academic organization and to look at presidential leadership as contingent on a particular situation. The prevailing paradigm was still a rational one in which a single leader of the academic institution is trying to orchestrate the behavior of followers.

Eventually the research agenda shifted to an emphasis on leaders and followers working together to achieve shared goals. The literature on leadership in higher education began to include both transactional and transformational approaches to leadership, as well as the concept that leadership is shared by many in an academic institution – faculty, students, and administrators. Leadership in academic organizations

began to emphasize the significance of symbols for making meaning in an academic community and for the importance of a shared vision among all stakeholders in the academy (Bolman and Deal, 1984).

An interesting new direction in the literature on leadership is the study of teamwork in higher education (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Team-oriented leadership is believed to differ in important ways from individual-centered leadership. Advantages associated with effective teams include creative problem-solving, cognitive complexity, peer support, and increased accountability. As cultural entities, teams are best understood by focusing on how team members think and act together (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993, p.31).

Leadership in Community Colleges

Just as the treatment of leadership in higher education in the literature was different from other treatments of leadership because of the unique aspects of colleges and universities as organizations, so too the special characteristics of community colleges lead to different and specialized treatment for leadership in community colleges. Richardson *et al.* (1994) argue that community colleges differ from other forms of higher education in ways that have vast implications for leadership. Among the defining features of community colleges are the diversity of the student body, the variety of curricular functions, an overarching focus on teaching and learning, and the multiple constituencies competing for institutional attention and resources. As a result of their distinct characteristics, it is important for the research agenda to recognize and respond to the unique features of community colleges and how they affect leaders and the practice of leadership. Roueche *et al.* defined leadership in community colleges as

"the ability to influence, shape, and embed values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors consistent with increased staff and faculty commitment to the unique missions of the community college" (1989, p. 18).

Despite their distinctive features, research specifically addressing the unique aspects of leading and managing community colleges is relatively limited. Cohen, Brawer, and Associates (1994) highlighted the lack of such research when they searched the ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges in preparation of their book, *Managing Community Colleges: A Handbook of Effective Practice*. They found in the period from 1982 through 1993, a total of 8.5 percent of the ERIC documents pertained to the topics of administration, leadership and management in community colleges; 5.9 percent of articles concerned issues of community college administration; 2.0 percent focused on college presidents; and an additional 0.6 percent pertained to department heads and institutional leadership (1994, p. xiii).

The office of the president has dominated much of the research agenda on community colleges (Vaughan, 1986; Cohen and March, 1986; Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989). More than 150 publications discussing the life experiences, career paths, priorities, relationships and leadership styles of the chief executive officer in community colleges were produced between the years of 1989 and 1995 (Pierce and Pedersen, 1997). Some of this work has been important, path-breaking studies that have shaped thinking about leadership in community colleges.

Former community college president George B. Vaughan completed one of the early significant studies of community college leaders. He gathered survey and interview data of a large national sample of presidents to ascertain their backgrounds,

experiences, and path to the chief executive office. To the extent that other senior administrators are included in the study, it is generally for the purpose of informing solely on the role of the president within the institution.

Roueche, Baker, & Rose (1989) also reported on a national study of successful and exemplary community college presidents. Using a complex theoretical model to investigate transformational leadership, including quantitative and qualitative research data, Roueche *et al*, identified vision as a significant theme and an essential element of transformational leadership in community colleges. Highly successful and effective presidents could articulate a specific vision of the future, a commitment to change, and an orientation to the future that was shared with the larger college community. Outstanding community college presidents were found to demonstrate the behaviors associated with transformational leadership, especially shared vision, commitment to change and future orientation (Roueche *et al*., 1989).

Another important contribution to leadership ideas, research, and community college practice is George A. Baker III and Associates' (1992) volume on cultural leadership in community colleges. The underlying premise of *Cultural Leadership* is that the traditional, rational and bureaucratic emphasis that predominated in community colleges needs to be replaced with an understanding of a holistic organizational culture.

The felt significance of leaders and leadership to the future health and well-being of community colleges is evidenced in a four part research brief sponsored by the American Council of Community Colleges. The first report in the series published in 2001 maintains that community colleges are facing an impending leadership crisis and details the projected retirements of college presidents, senior administrators and faculty

leaders (Shults, 2001). Not only were presidents expected to retire in large numbers, 45% by 2007, the average age of other senior administrators was also creeping up, from 50 in 1984 to 52 in 2000. The ranks in the traditional pathway or pipeline to the chief executive office, in other words, were also thinning and projected to retire in growing numbers. Of particular interest in the report is the assertion that among the important traits for future community college presidents is a collaborative spirit.

The second research brief in the AACC Leadership Series presented the results of a national survey in 2000 that examined the career paths, backgrounds, and professional development mechanisms of senior administrators in community colleges (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002). The 2000 survey largely replicated the work of Moore, Martorana, and Twombly (1985) in order to allow for comparison of the two time periods. Fifty-two percent of the presidents in the 2000 study had either held the title of provost, senior academic affairs, or senior instruction officer, whereas in the Moore *et al.* report, only 36% of the presidents were in the traditional academic pipeline prior to assuming office.

CAOs, on the other hand, were slightly less likely to have held immediate past positions with traditional academic titles in 2000 than they were in 1985. In the earlier study, 65% of CAOs were in the typical administrative path; by 2000 the figure was closer to 50 percent. The pathway to the CAO office had broadened to include positions in continuing education, student affairs, and other nonacademic administrative positions.

While the gender makeup of CAOs had changed dramatically in the years between 1985 and 2000, the ethnic difference had not. In 1985, Moore, *et al.* reported

only 16 percent of CAOs were women; in 2000, that figure had increased to close to 42 percent. Ninety percent of the respondents to the 1985 study were white; about 84 percent of responding administrators in 2000 were white. Because of the small numbers involved, Amey and VanDerLinden do not break out the figures by specific positions.

Unlike community college presidents, the CAOs in the 2000 study were more likely to be promoted from within their institution (52%) than to be hired from another community college (28%). They were also more likely to be employed in their current positions for five years or less (74%) and to hold a doctorate (74%).

In the third brief in the leadership series, the attention once again focused on the community college president. Weisman and Vaughan (2002) replicated a Career and Lifestyle Survey (CLS) that had been administered in 1984, 1991 and 1996. The ability to compare information over several time periods is especially valuable for identifying trends in community college leaders. Weisman and Vaughan point out two important findings in the research brief. First, the percentage of female community college presidents increased from nearly 11 percent in 1991 to close to 28 percent in 2001. This fact is undoubtedly linked to the growing number of women who have been promoted to chief academic officer in the past decade, since the CAO position is the most frequently held position prior to the presidency. Secondly, the representation of ethnic or racial minorities in the community college presidency has largely remained unchanged from 11 percent in 1991 to 14 percent in 2001.

The final research brief in the AACC Leadership Series examines the institutional context of community college administration and explores senior administrator perspectives on institutional mission and priorities (Amey and

VanDerLinden, 2003). Whereas the preceding three reports had taken a national perspective on community colleges leaders and leadership, this brief includes additional information about regional differences.

The culminating report draws from the national survey data that was gathered and reported in the second AACC research brief on career paths. Respondents were asked, among other things, to rate the importance for their institution of a series of internal and external issues facing community colleges. The extent to which an external issue was considered important differed by the geographic region of the respondent. In New England, the external issues that were rated as the most important were state financial support for programs and teaching, state financial support for students, articulation with colleges and universities, and federal financial support for students. The internal issue that was rated most highly for the New England region was fiscal management and resource allocation.

To understand the personal factors related to administrative careers, Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) asked administrators to rate their level of satisfaction with a number of institutional and personal issues. Eighty-two percent of the community college administrators indicated that the opportunity to serve others was the most important source of their overall job satisfaction.

Chief Academic Officers

There is a small but growing body of empirical research on the leadership of chief academic officers. Despite the fact that the position of dean has existed in higher education in the United States since 1870, there are only a handful of substantial works that focus on the chief academic officer position (Gould, 1964; Dibden, 1968; Dill,

1980; Morris, 1981; Brown, 1984; Vaughan, 1990; Creswell & England, 1994; Martin and Samels, 1997). When Dill took up the subject in 1980, he observed that presidents and professors had been exhaustively studied while "the deanship, represents a void in our database" (1980, p. 92). Creswell and England underscored his point more than a decade later remarking, "the position of dean has received little scholarly attention" (1994, p. 7).

To the extent that research has focused on chief academic officers, the research has been limited to a relatively few topics. In one of the first reported research studies of CAOs, Gould (1964) surveyed 166 college and university deans and compiled a list of their responsibilities. The responsibilities that placed the most demands on their time included faculty relations and morale; recruitment of faculty; curriculum work; budget, promotions, personnel evaluation; committee work; routine administration; and finally, student counseling. Twenty-five years later, Miller (1989) polled 451 chief academic officers and determined that the pattern of activities of the CAO had changed little from the time of Gould's study.

An examination of the managerial roles emphasized by chief academic officers in 406 comprehensive colleges and universities was undertaken by Mech in 1997. Using Mintzberg's (1973) typology of managerial roles, Mech constructed profiles of the 349 CAOs (86% response rate) who completed a questionnaire focused on the managerial roles the job requires. Leader, resource allocator, and disseminator were the most highly ranked managerial roles. Mintzberg identified these roles as largely focused on the internal and interpersonal operations of an organization. He concluded that the chief academic officer has significant responsibility for ensuring that the daily

operation of the organization is of primary concern. As second in command and internally focused, the chief academic officer enables the president to concentrate on external roles. Mech does report that the more external roles of spokesperson and negotiator, although less frequently emphasized, are still part of a chief academic officer's experience.

Forty years after Gould's initial exploration of chief academic officers, the nature and scope of academic leadership has been altered due to "a climate of changing faculty priorities, declining institutional resources, fickle student consumer preferences, and eroding public confidence (Martin & Samels, p. 8)." There is growing pressure on chief academic officers to provide the leadership necessary to build consensus around an effective framework for teaching and learning in the face of external forces and challenges. Knowing more about the chief academic officer position, responsibilities, and perspective can help support CAOs perform more effectively in their increasingly challenging role as academic leaders.

Chief Academic Officers in Community Colleges

Just as there is limited research on chief academic officers in comprehensive colleges and universities, there are few formal research studies done specifically on the CAO in community colleges. Despite the senior nature of the position and the fact that the CAO position is a known pathway to the presidency of a community college, relatively little attention has been paid to this role. George Vaughan completed the first major study of chief academic officers in community colleges as late as 1990.

Each community college has a chief academic officer, but the title of the position varies significantly amongst the institutions. There are 18 different combinations of

titles describing the individual with responsibility for the entire academic program in the New England region alone. Dean of Academic Affairs is the most frequently reported designation with nine institutions using this title. Other title combinations typically include Vice President or Provost. The switch from deans of instruction to vice presidents for academic affairs is seen as suggestive of management changes that have occurred in community colleges. Whereas earlier deans of instruction would be responsible for faculty selection and oversight, curriculum development and the range of instructional practices, these activities are typically now largely assigned to divisional deans or alternatively to the department level (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

The research that is reported on CAOs in community colleges tends to cluster into four main areas of emphasis. The most common research study of community college CAOs involves descriptive profiles of their personal and professional characteristics; common roles and responsibilities; exploratory studies of competencies and attitudes; and career path studies. The most important work on CAOs for this study is Vaughan (1990) and Anderson (2002).

There are numerous profiles of chief academic officers serving in community colleges (Vaughan, 1990; Hawthorne, 1994; McKenney and Cedja, 2000; Teague, 2000; and Anderson, 2002). Demographic data about CAOs in research profiles typically includes, but is not limited to, gender, ethnicity, age, and educational level. As a result of years of demographic data collection, it is increasingly possible to identify patterns and trends in the characteristics of chief academic officers in community colleges.

In *Pathway to the Presidency,* Vaughan (1990) reported on the results of a national survey of 1,169 chief academic officers of public community, junior, and

technical colleges identified by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC). Using survey data collected from a 53% response rate, complemented by interview material from 15 CAOs from 13 states, Vaughan explored the unique challenges faced by CAOs in community colleges as they attempted to lead in their institutions from a senior administrative position.

Of the 619 deans that responded to Vaughan's survey, the average age of the chief academic officer was 48, over 87% were married, 21% were women, and only 7% were racial or ethnic minorities. In addition, most deans were from blue-collar families, a majority held doctorates (70%); almost half were working in the states in which they grew up (49%), and most belonged to professional associations (80%). Vaughan reported that the deans of instruction he surveyed had been on average in their current positions for 5.4 years. Women, Blacks, and Hispanics had been in their positions less time than white males. The deans also indicted a high likelihood (68%) of moving to a new position within five years.

Hawthorne (1994) subsequently surveyed 1,243 public and private 2-year colleges to construct a profile of chief academic officers and received a 57% response rate. The CAO profile was very similar to Vaughan's earlier findings. The typical community college chief academic officer was a 50-year-old white man, with a doctorate, who had served in the CAO position for six years. The percentages of women (26%) and minorities (12%) serving as chief academic officers had grown in the ensuing years.

The profile of the community college CAO is changing, but not dramatically. In a more recent profile study, McKenney and Cejda's (2000) found the typical

community college CAO to be slightly older, with more education, and more experience than Vaughan's initial work. Drawing on a national sample of 628 chief academic officers of public community colleges with a comprehensive mission, McKenney and Cejda attained a 59% response rate to their request for CAOs to complete a survey. According to their research, the CAO was most likely to be a 52-year-old married white man with a doctorate who has served in office for slightly more than six years. While the ethnic background of community college CAOs had not significantly changed in the ten-year period since Vaughan's (1990) seminal work, the proportion of female CAOs, who were serving in community colleges had increased substantially. Roughly one-third of CAOs by 2000 were female, 51-years-old, married, white, with a PhD, and had typically served in the office for slightly more than five years.

In a national study of community college presidents, chief academic officers, and other senior administrators, Amey, Vander Linden, & Brown (2002) reported that the percentage of female chief academic officers had grown to 42%. This is an increase of nearly 26% over the 1985 study completed by Moore *et al.* Wh ile the percentage of female CAOs had increased in the interim years, the ranks of chief academic officers who identified themselves as Caucasian (89%) remained roughly the same in 2000 as it was in Moore's 1985 study (86.2%). Most chief academic profiles are conducted at the national level; relatively few CAO profiles are reported at the state and multi-state level.

In addition to demographic profiles, another frequent type of research on chief academic officers in community college explores the competencies, attitudes, and behaviors of senior administrators. Chief instructional officers holding a doctoral degree have identified the skills they believe are necessary for effective practice and

have assessed the preparation received from doctoral programs of study (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002).

Smith and Hawthorne (1993) reported on a 1991 national survey of community college chief academic officers' perceived commitment to instructional effectiveness. The study compared CAOs from two-year institutions with responses from an earlier study of four-year CAOs. Community colleges' CAOS reported higher commitment to instructional effectiveness, campus environment and culture, and instructional development activities. Only in the area of employment practices and policies did CAOs in baccalaureate institutions express a higher level of commitment.

A third dominant theme in chief academic officer research studies is career pathways. The importance of the CAO position as a source of presidential leadership has been established (Vaughan, 1990). The largest percentages of former chief academic officers either become presidents (30%) or retire (27%) (Cejda, McKenney, & Fuller, 2001). There have been a series of studies on the typical career paths, the existence of internal and external labor markets, and the mobility of chief academic officers in community colleges. Moore *et al.* (1985) investigated the career pathways for community college administrators along with a demographic profile of CAOs. Amey, VanDerLinden, & Brown (2002), subsequently, used the work as a benchmark.

Amey *et al.* (2002) also established that the majority of CAOs are hired into their position from their present institutions, where many of them had served for 10 years or more. Only 28% of responding CAOs were hired from another community college. Prior to becoming chief academic officers, most CAOs (51%) either held the position of Associate, Assistant or interim chief academic officer; Assistant, Associate,

or Academic Dean or Dean of Instruction; or Department Chair. Only a relatively few individuals are hired into the CAO position from outside academe (6%) or directly from the faculty (7%).

Several important and frequently cited studies have provided a national profile of chief academic officers in community colleges (Vaughan, 1990; Hawthorne, 1994; McKenney and Cedja, 2000; Teague, 2000; Anderson, 2002). There are few research studies that approach the subject of chief academic officers from a state, or multi-state level. Parker & Parker (1985) studied chief academic officers in Kansas and Jones (1999) concentrated on the state of Tennessee. Only one study was identified that, although a national in scope, grouped data on the basis of the six accreditation regions (Anderson, 2000).

Anderson was interested in the managerial roles of CAOs in community colleges and made comparisons by region, gender, age, and managerial experience. Anderson did not identify any statistically significant differences in the ranking of managerial roles based on accrediting region. The three most emphasized roles in all six regions were leaders, liaison, and disseminator. Although the order of the remaining seven managerial roles did vary between regions, the difference was not statistically significant in Anderson's study.

The small size of the sample reported in Anderson's study may be problematic. There were only 10 respondents for the entire New England region. Large samples give more accurate results than smaller samples and it is unlikely that results from a sample are exactly the same as for the entire population. One of Anderson's recommendations

for future research is to "study a particular region in greater detail and compare those results with this national study" (2002, p.127).

The majority of national research on community college administrators relies on surveys for producing data. A large population makes it difficult and expensive to collect and process qualitative data. Vaughan (1990), however, complemented his national survey of CAOs with in-depth interviews with a modest sample of exemplary chief academic officers. His interviews yielded substantial information and insights on the position and the individuals serving as chief academic officers. Combining survey and interview material can add to the reliability and validity of results.

The majority of research on community college CAOs primarily involves the collection of data on the institutional level, state level, and national level (Parker & Parker, 1985; Vaughan, 1990). Only one study was identified that classified data on chief academic officers in community colleges by region (Anderson, 2002). There is little research on regional distinctions in the community college literature.

Collaboration in Higher Education

Collaboration is both a process and a goal for working together toward a common purpose (Morse, 2004). It is a continuum of efforts that range from networking, coordination, and cooperation, to collaboration. Each point on the continuum requires a different kind of relationship and a different level of trust among the participants. Networking is the least complex, and refers to basic contact between individuals and organizations who share information. Coordination is the formal, institutionalized relationships among existing networks of organizations (Mulford, 1984). Cooperation entails partnerships and agreements to work together to meet goals

but does so without substantially changing the service provided, or the rules and regulations governing the separateness of cooperating institutions, individuals, or groups (Melaville & Bland, 1993). Collaboration occurs when partners share a vision, establish common goals, and agree to use their power to achieve common goals, including commitment of resources and the willingness to alter existing policies (Baker *et al*, 1995).

Post-secondary institutions in the United States, both public and private, are linked to each other through an interdependent national system of education (Kezar, 2001). In addition to the links with the federal government, colleges and universities are heavily influenced by the actions and priorities of disciplinary associations, unions, private foundations, and accreditation agencies.

Accreditation agencies are one of the most important external forces affecting the operation of academic institutions in the United States. One of the primary roles of accreditation is to ensure the continuous improvement of higher education by establishing standards and accountability for institutions. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accredits community colleges in the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

In New England, there are two additional organizations that influence institutions of higher education in the region. The New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) fills the need for interpretation, analysis, and technical assistance on issues affecting colleges and universities. It organizes and coordinates Think Tanks, publications, visiting fellowships, conferences and workshops, and

collaborations with national organizations (www.nerche.org). NERCHE coordinates a Think Tank for chief academic officers in New England which includes CAOs from all institutional types. Only three community college CAOs were members of the 2002-2003 Academic Affairs Think Tank sponsored by NERCHE.

A second organization that is instrumental in post-secondary education in the region is the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE). NEBHE was organized by a governmental agreement between the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont for the purpose of promoting greater educational opportunities and services for the residents of New England. NEBHE publishes an annual directory of colleges and universities in New England, distributes a quarterly journal, and organizes conferences. Access to policy-makers, the resources to convene decision makers, and the power to widely distribute information, contribute to NEBHE's influence on higher education in New England.

Summary

There is a large body of significant research on the topic of leadership. Research on leadership has become increasingly more relational and more complex. While the traits and behaviors of individual leaders are still of interest to researchers, teams and dispersed leadership have become important in their own right within the field.

Literature on leadership in higher education institutions is robust, but has primarily focused on comprehensive colleges and universities, and the specific roles of president and faculty. The distinct mission and context of community colleges warrant a research agenda of its own. The research agenda on community colleges as distinct institutions is limited, but increasing. The significant role that community colleges are

performing in education and work-force development makes it even more important that higher education historians and analysts expand their vision to include community colleges.

Much of the research on leadership in higher education to date has been focused at the national level, is primarily interested in presidential leadership, and is unpublished. While more research has been conducted on community college leaders and leadership since the mid-1990s, it remains a largely unexplored frontier with huge potential to inform practice.

Research on community college chief academic officers is also limited except for a growing literature of demographic profiles and career pathways of CAOs. There is a need to explore the other aspects of the position, especially the leadership role of community college chief academic officers.

External organizations influence the practice of higher education in the New England region. As a result of accreditation agencies being organized on a regional basis there appears to be a built in rational for higher education institutions within the region to work together to improve planning and practice. The majority of published research is reported as national figures. There are few studies that report information on a regional basis.

There is a growing recognition of the importance of working collaboratively to address systemic issues. Regional networks of chief academic officers, strategic alliances, and institutional collaborations are recommended strategies for academic leaders (Martin & Samels, 1997). The experiences and perspectives of CAO's in community colleges on the importance and value of collaboration are not known and

deserve investigation. It is important to identify the extent to which administrative leaders like chief academic officers are interested and able to collaborate with their peers to address common issues and concerns.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

There is a pressing need to expand leadership capacity in community colleges beyond the chief executive officer and the need to develop additional leadership strategies to respond to current challenges facing community colleges. Relatively little research has been done on the leadership role of chief academic officers in community colleges or their views and experiences with collaboration as a strategy for solving common problems. There is even less information on chief academic officers that is organized by geographic region. This study uses mixed research methods to address this gap in the research literature.

Several research questions inform this study.

1. How do CAOs view their role as academic leaders in community colleges?
2. What are the views of chief academic officers with respect to collaboration with other chief academic officers?
3. What are the experiences of chief academic offices with respect to collaboration with other chief academic officers?
4. What factors facilitate or inhibit collaboration among chief academic officers in New England community colleges?
5. Do chief academic officers see increased collaboration as likely for the region?
6. What is the profile of chief academic officers in public community colleges in the New England region?

This chapter describes the research including the setting, population, design, methods, data collection and data analysis.

Research Setting

The setting for this research study is the public comprehensive community colleges in New England, a region that encompasses the six states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) oversees the region. The 40 public community colleges included in this study are eligible for accreditation by the NEASC Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE). A complete list of the research population is included in Appendix F.

The public community colleges in the New England region range in size from small, single campus institutions to large, multi-campus organizations. Several institutions are rural and serve large geographic areas, while others are in urban areas and serve concentrated populations. Vermont and Rhode Island have single institutions which serve the entire state, although Vermont offers its programs in 12 locations widely dispersed throughout the state. Rhode Island serves an entire state through four campuses. Other states, such as Connecticut with 12 community colleges, and Massachusetts with 15 state institutions, have a system of community colleges arrayed across the area, providing relatively easy access to a local institution. New Hampshire and Maine are large geographic areas with four and seven community colleges respectively. With a combined enrollment of more than 160,000, the community colleges in the New England region are a significant force in post-secondary education.

Table 3.1: Comparison of New England states

	CT	ME	MA	NH	RI	VT	Totals
State Pop. 2003	3,483,372	1,305,728	6,433,422	1,287,687	1,076,164	619,107	14205480
Public Two-Year Colleges 2004	12	7	15	4	1	1	40
Fall 2003 Enrollment	45,160	10,798	82,128	12,103	16,223	5,463	171,875
Minority Students as % of Total Higher Education Enrollment 2002	20%	4%	17%	3%	14%	5%	10.5%
Per-Capita Income 2003	$43,173	$28,831	$39,815	$34,702	$31,916	$30,740	$34,863
State Appropriation for Higher Education Per $1,000 of Personal Income 2004	$4.96	$6.40	$3.09	$2.53	$5.05	$4.10	$4.36

Source: *Connection: The Journal of the New England Board of Higher Education*, Volume XIX, Number 3, 2005.

There are important differences in the characteristics of the six New England states. Massachusetts has the largest population and the most community colleges with the highest student enrollment. Connecticut is the wealthiest state and has the highest percentage of minority students. New Hampshire has the lowest state appropriation and the lowest percentage of minority students. Vermont has the smallest population and the fewest community college students. Maine has the highest state appropriation per 1,000 personal income for higher education in the region. Rhode Island has the largest community college with an enrollment of over sixteen thousand students in a single institution.

Twelve public institutions of higher education comprise the Connecticut system of community colleges and enrolled 45,160 students in 2003.

Table 3.2 Connecticut public community colleges

Community College	Fall 2003 FT Enrollment	Founded
Asnuntuck	1476	1972
Northwestern	1543	1965
Quinebaug Valley	1571	1971
Middlesex	2400	1969
Capital	3381	1992
Three Rivers	3622	1992
Tunxis	3983	1969
Housatonic	4678	1966
Naugatuck Valley	5155	1992
Gateway	5587	1992
Manchester	5717	1963
Norwalk	6047	1992

Maine has seven public two-year colleges with a total enrollment in 2002 of 10,789.

Table 3.3 Maine public community colleges

Community College	Fall 2003 FT Enrollment	Founded
Washington County	485	1969
York County	924	1994
Kennebec Valley	940	1970
Northern Maine	1013	1961
Central Maine	1852	1964
Eastern Maine	2079	1966
Southern Maine	3505	1946

Massachusetts has 15 public community colleges with a total enrollment in 2003 of 82,128.

Table 3.4 Massachusetts public community colleges

Community College	Fall 2003 FT Enrollment	Founded
Berkshire	2272	1960
Roxbury	2365	1973
Greenfield	2368	1962
Mt. Wachusett	4118	1963
Cape Cod	4418	1961
Massachusetts Bay	5380	1961

Springfield Technical	6157	1967
Northern Essex	6301	1961
Holyoke	6335	1946
Quinsigamond	6592	1963
North Shore	6612	1965
Bristol	6639	1965
Massasoit	6808	1966
Bunker Hill	7397	1973
Middlesex	8366	1969

New Hampshire has four public two-year colleges with a total enrollment in 2002 of 12,103.

Table 3.5 New Hampshire public community colleges

Community College	Fall 2003 FT Enrollment	Founded
Claremont/Nashua	1843	1970
Berlin/Laconia	2080	1966
NH Technical Institute	3714	1965
Manchester/Stratham	4466	1945

Rhode Island has one public two-year college with a total enrollment in 2002 of 16,223. The largest public two-year college in New England, the Community College of Rhode Island has four campuses in Lincoln, Providence, Warwick and Newport.

Table 3.6 Rhode Island public community colleges

Community College	Fall 2003 FT Enrollment	Founded
Rhode Island	16,223	1964

Vermont has one public two-year college with a total enrollment of 5,463. The college uses 12 locations throughout Vermont.

Table 3.7 Vermont public community colleges

Community College	Fall 2003 FT Enrollment	Founded
Vermont	5,463	1970

Research Population

The 40 chief academic officers serving in New England community colleges are the focus of this study. A range of titles is used in the New England region to identify the person responsible for oversight of the academic program in community colleges. Vice President, Provost, and Dean are the most common designations.

Anderson (2002) prepared a profile of chief academic officers in New England community colleges as part of a larger national study. In comparison to the national data, the New England region had a much higher percentage of males in the CAO position. The span of control of the CAO was smaller, and there was more collective bargaining. CAOs, on average, had been at their current institution longer, and had slightly less years of managerial experience. Anderson (2002) relied on a small, but purposeful, sample of the whole population of chief academic officers in New England. One of the purposes of this research is to update the profile of New England community college chief academic officers by studying the entire population.

Table 3.8 Comparison of New England region with national data

	Span of control (Mean)	Collective Bargaining	Gender %Male	Age (Mean)	Years of Managerial Experience (Mean)	Years at Current Institution (Mean)	Years in Current Position (Mean)
New England Region	8.7	90%	70%	54.5	15.3	16.2	5.5
National	13.7	55.4% yes	59.2%	52.5	16.4	13.5	5.4

Anderson, 2002

Research Design

This study employs a combined methods approach. According to Cresswell (1991), "A combined method study is one in which the researcher uses multiple methods of data collection and analysis." The purpose of combining methods in a single study is that the first method can be used to help inform the second method (Greene *et al.* 1989). A two-phase design approach is one in which the researcher conducts a qualitative phase of the study and a separate quantitative phase of the study (Cresswell, 1991). The value of the two-phase approach for this study is that it facilitates gathering information from a large number of respondents in an efficient manner.

Surveys are cost effective and an efficient method to gather information. In this study, surveys were used to gather information from the research population of 40 chief academic officers and to identify a small set of five CAOs who would yield information-rich material through interviews.

Interviews are recognized as a means of gaining access and understanding of the meaning that individuals attribute to their behavior within an educational context (Seidman, 1998). In order to complement the survey material gathered from chief academic officers and to correct or explore survey response in more depth, individual, hour-long, face-to-face interviews with a purposeful sample of five chief academic officers were conducted. The set of interviewed chief academic officers were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate, the potential for information-rich case examples suggested by their survey responses, and the size and location of the community college.

Methods

This research used both survey and interview methods. A self-designed written survey was used to first gather information from the entire research population about their views and experiences as a chief academic officer, their views and experiences with collaboration, and to collect demographic data. The major purpose of the survey was to gather information from the total population of chief academic officers and to identify respondents for more in-depth exploration of the topic.

An original survey was necessary because of a lack of research focused on the leadership role of chief academic officers and on collaboration as a strategy for solving common problems. The survey questions were open-ended and allowed respondents to complete the instrument in their own words. Previous work by Vaughan (1990), Anderson (2002), and Birnbaum (1988) was important in the development of questions on the survey. Prior to using the survey, it was shared with senior community college

administrators for feedback on the clarity of the questions and the likelihood of yielding valuable information. The instrument was revised based on the feedback received.

The survey was organized into three distinct components and comprised of a combination of questions asking chief academic officers to offer their view on CAO leadership, to identify their views and experience with collaboration, and to collect demographic information that could be compared with other profile research findings. The responses to the survey prompts were either short-answer, yes or no, or factual data. The survey was deemed an effective way to assess the appropriateness of a participant for the study. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix C.

A purposeful sample of five chief academic officers was selected to participate in semi-structured, open-ended interviews following the return of the written surveys. The purpose of the interviews in this study is to understand in more depth the experience of chief academic officers as leaders and potential collaborators. Individuals were selected to interview based on their willingness to discuss the leadership of chief academic officers and on the likelihood of yielding information-rich examples of chief academic officer collaboration. Additional factors influencing the selection of potential interviews were representation of New England states, gender, size of institution, and years in job.

The interviews were arranged through phone calls with the administrative assistants who support the chief academic officer. The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the cooperating CAO. Four of the five interviews took place on the community college campus of the CAO. One interview was conducted by phone. Those

interviewed received a thank you for their time and assistance. All of the interviews were recorded with the permission of the chief academic officer.

The interview process allowed the chief academic officer to elaborate on their survey answers, to describe in more detail the CAO role in the community college, and to discuss their experience working with other CAOs to respond to common issues or problems.

The interview protocol used in this study is included in Appendix E. At the time of the interview, the protocol was adapted to the survey responses of each interviewed chief academic officer.

Data Collection

A letter of introduction, survey, stamped self-addressed envelope, and ink pen were sent to chief academic officers serving in 40 New England public community colleges in August of 2004 with a request that the survey be completed and returned. Seventeen surveys were returned in response to the first mailing. In late September, a second mailing was sent as an attachment to an email request to CAOs who had not responded to the first mailing. Three surveys were returned in response to the email request. In October, a second print mailing with a cover letter, survey, and self-addressed stamped envelope was sent to non-responding chief academic officers. A third and final request was mailed on December 5, 2004. Five surveys were returned from chief academic officers following the final request for participation. All data used in the study was received by January 2005.

The total number of completed surveys returned was 25, for a response rate of 62.5%. Fourteen chief academic officers did not respond to repeated requests to

participate in the study. Chief academic officers from five of the six New England states returned surveys. The response rates for the six New England states were 0%, 16%, 65%, 66%, 73%, and 100%. Eighteen of the 25 (72%) responding chief academic officers indicated a willingness to be interviewed. There did not appear to be any significant differences between either the responders or non-responders to the survey instrument, or between those indicating a willingness to be interviewed and those declining to be interviewed.

Five chief academic officers were identified for face-to-face interviews in the second stage of the research. The subjects were selected based on a positive response to the survey request for an interview, the perceived potential for rich descriptions of their views and experiences as chief academic officers, their views and experience with collaboration, and on several demographic variables, including their geographic location, and the amount of experience as a chief academic officer, and gender.

An hour-long on-site interview was requested and scheduled at the convenience of each chief academic officer. One CAO suggested a phone interview be conducted in lieu of a visit due to the substantial travel distance involved in doing a campus visit. Four interviews were conducted on the CAO campus and one interview was conducted at a pre-arranged time over the phone.

At the time of the interview, each chief academic officer received, and signed an informed consent letter outlining the terms of participation in the study. Each of the interviewed chief academic officers agreed to be taped as part of their participation in the study. The tapes were subsequently transcribed personally by the researcher. The information was analyzed for themes and significant information related to the CAO

leadership role and collaboration. The transcripts were not returned to the chief academic officers for verification, as the taped conversations were clear and unambiguous.

Each chief academic officer was given a typed transcript of his or her survey responses at the start of the interview. The interview questions, like the survey, were grouped around the two lines of inquiry: 1) exploring views and experiences as a chief academic officer; and 2) exploring views and experiences with collaboration. The questions and flow of the interview were adapted to the particular chief academic officer.

Prior to each interview appointment, the college websites of the participants were perused for information about the college. While on campus, additional materials were gleaned from admissions or other public information displays. This information helped to establish the context within which the chief academic officer to be interviewed was working.

Data Analysis

The survey data was gathered and organized as a set of responses to each survey question. Patterns in the responses were identified, coded, and then categorized by themes suggested by the literature on leadership and collaboration. Simple frequencies and percentages were calculated and arrayed in tables for analysis.

The interviews with chief academic officers were audio-taped and personally transcribed by the researcher. Each interview was first read and analyzed in its entirety to gauge how each individual chief academic officer views his or her personal leadership and experience with collaboration. Particularly insightful and representative

quotes were highlighted and excerpted to illustrate CAO thoughts about leadership and collaboration.

All of the interview data was subsequently organized as a set of responses to each interview question. Major and minor themes were identified in the data and coded for similarities and differences. The themes that emerged from the interview material were matched with the themes in the survey material.

Presentation of Findings

The survey and interview data related to the role of New England community college chief academic officers is presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five includes survey and interview data related to collaboration among chief academic officers in New England community colleges. In Chapter Six, the survey data related to the profile of chief academic officers in New England community colleges is presented.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS

"I always wanted to grow up to be a chief academic officer. I saw the dean as someone who could really have an impact on what went on in the academic part of the college, in the curriculum, in terms of the direction and the quality of instruction. So, that was what drove me to the position." CAO of New England community college

"In some ways I never wanted to be a chief academic officer. I never applied for it, because the position was too status quo, too embedded in the rigors of a contract and the constraints of the institution. I always worked outside that area because that is where the innovation and change was. I consider myself a change agent. I am a builder, not a maintainer. So it (the chief academic officer role) was never a good fit for my professional skills and interests." CAO of New England community college

Chief academic officers occupy an important status in the administrative hierarchy in community colleges. CAOs report directly to the president and have overall responsibility for teaching and learning in the college. One of the research questions posed in this study is: How do CAOs view their role as academic leaders in community colleges? This chapter presents findings and analysis on the role of chief academic officers in community colleges.

The survey instrument included four questions exploring the views and experiences related to the leadership role of chief academic officers.

1. What three institutional priorities demand the most attention from you as a chief academic officer?
2. What institutional priority do you wish you could give more attention to?
3. What major impact have you had on a community college as a chief academic officer?

4. What gives you the greatest sense of accomplishment as a chief academic officer?

Twenty-five chief academic officers returned the survey for a response rate of 62.5%.

The interview protocol included seven additional questions probing the role of CAO as academic leaders in community colleges.

1. What is it like for you to be a chief academic officer in a community college?
2. How is being a chief academic officer different from your last position?
3. How do you determine which institutional priorities to give the most attention to as the CAO?
4. Which of the institutional priorities that you give the most attention is the most interesting or fulfilling for you?
5. What would need to happen in order for you to give more attention to (answer 4)?
6. What are the major resources you have as a CAO to affect change or to have an impact on your campus?
7. Can you describe for me a "high point" in your career as a chief academic officer?

Five chief academic officers from four New England states were interviewed in the conduct of this study.

The following findings are a distillation of data produced from responses to both the survey and interview questions. Because the larger question of role can best be addressed by looking at discrete components of the chief academic officer's experience,

the data is summarized and organized around the topical areas of priorities, resources, impact, and satisfaction. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the findings and a discussion of the CAO role as leaders in community colleges.

CAO Priorities

"What I want to do is to engage people in things they really want to do. Because if you do that, they are going to work far harder, do a much better job, get far more accomplished than they ever would if you are closely watching them and you are pushing them to do things that you want them to do that they don't necessarily want to do." CAO of New England Community College

Identifying the priorities of chief academic officers contributes to our understanding of what CAOs do, how they view their roles in community colleges, and how they view their responsibilities as leaders. It is also important to understand how CAOs set priorities and make decisions about allocating their time and attention.

The survey distributed to chief academic officers asked them to identify three institutional priorities that demand the most attention from them as a chief academic officer. Twenty-five CAOs responded to the open-ended question. Their answers were grouped into general categories for comparison and analysis. The institutional priorities which demand the most attention from chief academic officers fall into seven general categories.

Table 4.1 Institutional priorities that demand the most attention from CAOs.

Priority	Frequency	Percentage
Personnel	20	80%
Academic curriculum	20	80%
Financial	8	32%

System mandates	7	28%
Students	7	28%
Planning	6	24%
Miscellaneous	7	28%

The category of personnel includes faculty and staff hiring, mentoring, professional development, supervision, evaluation and union contract issues. Eighty percent of the responding chief academic officers identified some aspect of personnel matters as a major priority.

The academic category includes curriculum management and development, scheduling, pedagogy, program reviews, assessment, and academic policy formation. Academic related priorities are equally demanding of a chief academic officer's attention as the category of personnel. Eighty percent of CAOs cited academic issues as one of their top three most demanding institutional priorities.

The financial category includes resource development, allocation, budgeting, and financial oversight. Thirty-two percent of chief academic officers included a reference to financial items as one of the institutional priorities that required significant attention.

The system category includes CAO references to external policy makers and external organizations, such as accrediting bodies and state agencies. Twenty-eight percent of chief academic officers reported system level demands as one of their major priorities. CAOs in states with multiple community colleges and a system-level coordinating entity were the most likely to site system needs as an institutional priority.

The student category consists of specific references to student success, support services for students, enrollment, or retention. Twenty-eight percent of chief academic officers included students in the three institutional priorities that demand the most attention. CAOs who have joint responsibility for academic and student affairs within the organization claimed students as a principal priority.

The planning category contains references to strategic planning, action planning, and setting direction for the college. Planning was identified as a separate category because CAO references did not typically specify the intended purpose of the outcome. Planning could therefore be related to any number of the other specified institutional priorities. Twenty-four percent of chief academic officers included planning as a demanding institutional priority.

The miscellaneous category consists of an assortment of priorities that were identified by two or less chief academic officers. Twenty-eight percent of the CAOs included at least one priority that was of singular importance to them, such as expanding services to an additional campus, transitioning from a technical to a community college, crisis intervention, multiculturalism, and community outreach.

The identification of the institutional priorities that demand the attention of chief academic officers helps us to understand the specific elements of the community college operation that focus the CAOs' work. Knowing which priorities the CAOs would like to spend their time on can help to further examine CAO preferences for leadership. The survey therefore asked the CAOs to identify an institutional priority to which they could give more attention.

Forty percent of the surveyed CAOs wished they could be more engaged in initiating new academic programs, curriculum, and pedagogies. Thirty-two percent of the chief academic officers indicated they would prefer to be more personally involved with faculty support and development. Twenty-eight percent of CAOs expressed concern for improving what already exists in their college. They desired more time on assessment, enhancing quality, and developing best practices.

The interviewed CAOs were asked to expand on their stated preference for institutional priorities. The institutional priorities they give the most attention to that are also the most interesting or fulfilling for them, are largely focused on creating new programs, new processes for getting things done, and greater interaction with faculty and staff.

The extent to which the identification of these priorities is within the latitude of CAO discretion or alternately dictated by others can give additional insight into the leadership role of chief academic officers in community colleges. The origin of CAO priorities was explored in the interviews with chief academic officers. CAOs were asked about the process they use to determine which institutional priorities to give the most attention to as the chief academic officer. A chief academic officer of a medium size community college with eight years of CAO experience provided a particularly insightful explanation of priority setting:

> "I set my priorities based on what I assess to be the needs, based on my conversations with the president, my own assessment of the situation at the college, and other factors… what does the president set for goals, what do you have for tools in your area, where are you historically, what do you like, and what do you think personally is your strength. If the (state governing board) requires you to do something, then I have to set it as a priority. I don't have a choice over that. …There are those things I pick and there are those things that I have to do."

Similar considerations were voiced by other CAOs during the interviews. While each interviewed CAO spoke to multiple factors which influenced his/her priorities, there were several factors that were cited by multiple chief academic officers. Specific reference to the role of the college president in setting priorities was identified by three of the five CAOs. All college planning groups were a factor for at least three of the chief academic officers. The input of direct reports and faculty was cited in two of the interviews.

Most notably, every chief academic officer claimed a measure of personal discretion and autonomy in specifying the institutional priorities on which to focus their work. One CAO shared that she has "my own personal hobby horse...Things that I think we really need to attend to in order to keep things moving along." Another CAO feels strongly that "it isn't other people setting my priorities; it's just that I know what good practice is. I've always stayed abreast professionally in terms of what national trends are, professional associations, reading the Chronicle, going to conferences. I know where the institution should be, so I set the priorities."

Resources

"I don't know how you can be in this job in virtually any school and not be stretched beyond your reasonable limits. This is a job that stretches you. I'm not just saying that because I'm doing the job. It is a lot of work. It really and truly is...I find you need to be an octopus to the second power in order to try to do all the things that need to get done...I work too many hours, I know that and that's self-inflicted pain...it feels like there is so much that has to get done."

CAO of New England Community College

The position of chief academic officer in a community college is a high-ranking administrative job with a tremendous amount of responsibility. Regardless of what

position a CAO held prior to accepting the office, the chief academic officer role was invariably recognized as having more responsibility and significantly more work. Interviews were used to identify the range of resources chief academic officers have at their disposal to accomplish priorities and to affect change on campus. The most important resources identified by CAOs in the interviews are sanctions, rewards, public recognition, and personal power.

CAOs report that they have the capacity to use sanctions. The power to deny tenure and terminate employment is a limited but powerful resource at their disposal, a sanction considered a last resort, but nevertheless, a significant lever of influence. Two of the five interviewed chief academic officers shared stories about how they were forced to take action to terminate faculty in order to protect the integrity of the academic program at their institutions. In both instances, they felt the use of the ultimate sanction helped to underscore their resolve to improve the teaching and learning environment in their colleges.

All of the interviewed CAOs expressed a preference for using positive measures to influence colleagues in the academy. CAOs specifically talked in the interviews about their influence and control over the budget for academic affairs. The control of financial resources allows chief academic officers to shape behavior by offering merit pay, retraining and professional development dollars, and release time. These discretionary dollars are in addition to the influence the chief academic officer may wield in administrative level discussions about the entire college budget and resource picture.

Being in a position to publicly recognize achievement is another positive reward that is viewed by several CAOs as an effective way of encouraging people to do good work. A chief academic officer who instigated an annual teaching award process, believes it is a powerful way of making a difference in the quality of the overall culture of the institution.

"I felt for years that we failed to recognize great teaching and to say thank you for doing a great job publicly. We were always afraid that if we picked three people, there would be a fourth person who could've been selected and who would be hurt by it. But hopefully they will be picked next time. So we select four people every year for an award. The consequence of that is ever since we have been doing it we've been able to at least say publicly to some people, you're doing a very good job. We begin to create an overall environment."

Another significant type of resource CAOs use to affect change in community colleges is closely related to their interpersonal skills and relationships. In the interviews, chief academic officers discussed the quality of their relationships, especially with the president, direct reports, and faculty, as the most salient to their leadership role. A reputation for honesty and fairness builds credibility and respect for the CAO within the community college. This personal power is seen as translating into a lever of influence with groups and individuals that the CAO works with on campus. One CAO expressed her experience with power within the community college like this,

"I've always used my personal power. Because I wasn't a first among equals in my previous position, I had to develop a lot of personal power. I didn't have positional power. Frankly, in academia positional power isn't worth too much at the end of the day. So I find here it is about credibility and respect. Does this office have some levers of power? Yes, but I tend not to rely on that a lot."

Regardless of the source of the resources that chief academic officers control, the interviewed chief academic officers were unanimous in saying that there are insufficient resources in the academic area to accomplish all of the identified priorities.

Four of the five interviewed chief academic officers indicated that additional human resources are needed. Three CAOs specified an assistant to the CAO as the missing support they require and spoke about adding personnel to the academic area to assist with the workload. One CAO shared that she was "in the process of proposing to the president that I need a little bit more assistance somehow, because it is a huge position." Another laments, "unfilled positions are sitting and waiting for appropriations to inch there way up, if they ever do. There is an assistant and that position is sitting open. It's a luxury." Another chief academic officer, remarked "the job can not be done without more staffing, but the institution would need to invest in that." As one chief academic officer suggested, "I don't know how to create more time, so we need more hands."

A chief academic officer who had recently hired an assistant commented on the added value, "I now have a special assistant.... I am able to give that person some of the nuts and bolts kind of things like tracking faculty workloads and those type of things.... so it has freed me up a little bit." Without additional personnel, chief academic officers report they are left "doing what you have to do, there are only so many hours in the day."

CAO Impact

"I think I have been able to provide the leadership needed to support the faculty and staff's efforts to improve our programs and services. I have helped measure and articulate a shared vision, and helped to identify the steps necessary for implementation. I've also pursued resources, both internal and external, to support our efforts. I have tried to empower others to help them believe in possibilities!"

Another way of understanding the leadership role of chief academic officers is to determine the influence the CAO has on an institution. Chief academic officers were

asked on the survey to identify the major impact they have had on a community college as a CAO. The 25 survey participants' emphasized three major types of impacts in response to an open-ended question.

The development of effective organizational structures to encourage and improve communication was a frequently mentioned one. A third of the chief academic officers related examples of creating or strengthening the structure of decision making within their community college. For example, one chief academic officer pointed to the creation of "a college governance structure to give faculty opportunities for input into the decision-making process". Another CAO "helped to restructure both academic and student affairs in ways that have facilitated collaboration and renewed energies". While yet another respondent's effort to change the governance structure resulted in "a more inclusive participative approach" at his community college.

One third of the chief academic officers reported on the survey that their major impact on a community college was a contribution to better working relationships between groups on campus. For these CAOs, this has to do not so much with creating formal structures for decision making, but, instead with encouraging informal processes between individuals and groups. They are proud of being role models and assisting with building a culture of openness and inclusiveness. A chief academic officer describes her major impact as having "been successful in building relationships, trust and shared planning between units." Another CAO takes pride in helping "to set a tone, timely discussion, responsiveness to community, transparency" that he believes "has helped to energize faculty and staff." In a similar fashion, yet another CAO sees her impact as "strengthening relationships between faculty and administration by providing stability,

predictability, levelheaded fairness, leading to trust and creativity among faculty." One chief academic officer was proud of being able to "maintain high morale and productivity during periods of fiscal stringency," whereas another CAO believes she helped to restore institutional continuity by reducing "disorder and chaos by providing a fair and balanced approach and playing by the rules."

Expanding and improving the quality of academic programs is the third most frequently cited example of the impact of chief academic officers on community colleges. Six of the 25 responding chief academic officers indicated that their major impact was primarily related to the academic program in the community college. Their examples included: new program development and implementation, a system of curriculum review for all courses and programs, launching student outcomes assessment initiative, expanding program offerings, the expansion of innovative teaching approaches, and the initiation of a new assessment process and curriculum reform.

An additional area in which chief academic officers believe they have a major impact is in developing the "blueprint for the college's future." Several CAOs wrote about their role in formulating a vision of the future for their community college. With specific reference to their personal leadership they talked about having a vision for academic direction, providing leadership for building vision collaboratively, helping to measure and articulate a shared vision on their campus, and identifying the steps necessary for implementation.

CAO Role Satisfaction

"You know when everything comes together and you just see things you dreamed about. You hear a comment from a faculty member or hear a comment from a student, or I have a developing relationship with another administrator and things just kind of feel

right. Those things are all highs for me. When I go to graduation and I hear some of the stories from the students and I helped to do something to create or support that program, I feel so good." CAO of New England Community College

In order to better understand how chief academic officers in community colleges experience their role within their institutions, a survey question asked CAOs to identify the specific outcome of their work that gives them the greatest sense of accomplishment. Interviewed chief academic officers were asked to describe a high point in his or her career as a CAO. The findings described below are a composite of the chief academic officers' responses to both the survey and interview questions.

These individuals described their satisfaction as primarily arising from either student or faculty success. Seeing students thrive gives a majority of chief academic officers a great sense of accomplishment. As one CAO says, "to sit on the platform during graduation and see so many students graduating whose lives where impacted by so much difficulty and to see them persist and triumph, that never ceases to amaze me. I cannot think of a greater sense of accomplishment." Other chief academic officers shared similar sources of satisfaction, and claimed a great sense of accomplishment from strong student graduation rates, employer satisfaction, successful student transfer to baccalaureate institutions, and other measures of student progress and transformation.

A similar number of chief academic officers locate their primary sense of accomplishment in their work with and for faculty. These chief academic officers take pride in creating an environment in which faculty can be creative and successful, providing faculty with the resources and support they require to be successful in their teaching, and providing for a consistent, well-established, responsive educational

environment. This group of chief academic officers feels that as a result of their contribution, "faculty and staff have been empowered and supported and are acting appropriately in moving the institution forward." They see a direct correlation between their work as chief academic officers and faculty taking the initiative for improving the teaching/learning process. The ultimate outcome of this relationship between the CAO and the faculty is captured in this statement by one who remarked, "when I help faculty get their needs met…they can meet their students' needs."

Beyond student and faculty success, a significant number of chief academic officers explained how using their office to make connections between individuals and organizational units is a significant accomplishment. One chief academic officer, for example, indicated that he felt "really good when I can see people working together either within academic affairs or across units. It feels like they are maximizing their ability and their interests. I believe that I have been a force for problem-solving and collaboration across campus in an effort to knock down silos." Another CAO points to "team building within academic affairs, and providing leadership to connect effectively to other areas." A similar sentiment from a respondent who stated she finds the greatest sense of accomplishment in "witnessing the impact that bright, talented, and creative teams can have on a learning environment; it's like watching a team win the gold at the Olympics." An interviewed chief academic officer enjoyed solving problems and serving as the go-between among the President, students and faculty. By fostering a 'can do attitude' on campus, and solving complex problems, this CAO is satisfied that she helps to move the institution forward.

The interviews further revealed a genuine appreciation of the importance of the CAO role in community colleges and a deep desire on the part of the chief academic officers to make a difference with their institutions. The chief academic officer of a small community college offered the following reason for enjoying the work:

"I don't know what it would be like to be an academic dean in a baccalaureate school. I love community colleges. This makes sense to me. I'm still in love with the democratic mission. I've never wanted to be at a different level. I did my bachelor's work…I was a fellow…and for a while I was a consultant, so I got to deal with the politics of a university and I enjoy this far more, because things get done. There things take a long period of time, because they have to go through umpteen committees and so on. Here, this is like a 'Mickey Rooney' show. Let's put on a show and we can do it!"

In a similar fashion, another CAO of a larger institution in the same state offered the following reason for enjoying her work in community college.

"It's a lot of fun. As someone who has worked in a large urban university and attended college at a private liberal arts college as an undergraduate, one of the striking things is the community base. A lot of the work has to do, as is true in any institution, with working with faculty on curriculum and things like that. One of the pieces that is very different being at a community college, is the connecting links with school superintendents, with lawyers in the area, with advisory groups for our various pieces. There are all kinds of connections with the community, and our facilities are used by the community constantly, so that's a piece that is different."

Analysis

In the presentation of findings, data from surveys and interviews are brought together and organized into four themes: priorities, resources, impact, and role satisfaction. Taken together these themes provide a picture of the leadership role of chief academic officers in community colleges. The chapter concludes with a discussion and analysis of the implications of the findings about the leadership role of CAOs.

The findings produced in the conduct of this study indicate that chief academic officers in New England community colleges juggle multiple priorities, utilize a range of resources to accomplish goals, have a major impact on their institutions, and experience a high level of satisfaction in their challenging jobs. These findings are both consistent with previous research and extend our understanding of the chief academic officer role in community colleges.

The single great leader who dominated earlier research in higher education has given way to a more democratic and dispersed leadership model. While the position of president in the community college continues to be the recognized leader of the institution and has a significant role in the establishment of institutional priorities, other internal and external forces also shape the selection of important institutional priorities, including the ideas of the chief academic officer. Central system offices, direct reports to the CAO, the faculty, students, as well as the chief academic officer themselves make a significant contribution to the identification of academic priorities within community colleges.

As indicated by Bensimon and Newman (1993), leadership is increasingly more interactive, collaborative, and shared in academic institutions. According to the self-reports of chief academic officers in New England community colleges the need to accomplish goals through teamwork is just one of the practices that has become an important part of their leadership experience. Direct reports and faculty are critical constituencies of the chief academic officer and indispensable for the accomplishment of the academic mission of community colleges.

The findings of this study indicate that chief academic offices in community colleges are both managers and leaders. According to Kotter (1990), managers plan, organize and control and leaders establish direction, motivate and align people. The CAOs in New England community college report that their complex positions require them to be both competent managers and leaders. They must be able to ensure that the academic program meets immediate needs of students while they work with others to prepare to meet future academic needs as well.

Chief academic officers use a range of resources to accomplish their goals. They neither rely entirely on the power attached to their position nor do they assume that inspiration alone will suffice to motivate high performance. Chief academic officers appear to be acting in the manner of both transactional and transformational leaders (Burns, 1978).

The findings of this study corroborate the findings of the Amey and VanDerLinden (2003) in which senior administrators in the New England region cited fiscal management and resource allocation as an important priority. Budget issues were one of the top three institutional priorities cited by chief academic officers in this study. Similar to Gould's 1964 survey of chief academic officers, this study also found that faculty issues, the general area of the curriculum, and the budget are overriding concerns of community college CAOs.

The chief academic officers in New England, similar to the findings of Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) and Anderson (2002), are highly satisfied with their jobs. In reflecting on where they feel they have had the most impact and what has given them the greatest amount of satisfaction, chief academic officers in this study cite student and

faculty accomplishment. Community college chief academic officers indicate they receive a high level of satisfaction from the opportunity to serve others.

This study also corroborates Anderson's (2002) findings that chief academic officers emphasize the managerial roles of leader, liaison, and disseminator. According to the reports of chief academic officers in this study, CAOs do view themselves as leaders within their institutions, act as liaisons with important groups both internal and external to their institutions, and are continuously disseminating information and knowledge to others.

The clear overall impression of the findings is that chief academic officers are singularly focused on the academic mission in New England community colleges. CAOs spend most of their time working with faculty and the curriculum. In fact, their expressed preference would be to spend even more time initiating and improving the curriculum and developing closer relationships with faculty. Furthermore, they feel they have had the greatest effect on developing better organizational structures and processes and expanding and improving academic programs.

The priorities that consume the lion's share of New England community college CAOs underscore the importance they place on the faculty and curriculum. How these officials use resources to accomplish institutional priorities is an expression of their leadership. CAOs recognize that they have the power to use sanctions to influence faculty behavior. They will elect to terminate faculty who they feel are undermining the academic mission of the community college. But in an organized labor environment the threat of termination is not easily or lightly invoked. Whether it is because they have few alternatives, or because of a strongly held belief, chief academic officers in New

England community colleges have a clear preference for using rewards rather than sanctions to motivate faculty.

Both negative sanctions and positive rewards are of limited value in an academic environment in general, and in a organized labor environment in particular. Most of the terms of employment for faculty in New England community colleges are stipulated by contract, so there is little latitude to leverage class schedules, course assignments, or any other aspect of the faculty position. A chief academic officer who relies on transactional leadership to advance the academic mission will ultimately have little to work with in community colleges. Chief academic officers, maybe more so than other roles in community colleges, need to rely on their personal resources to guide and inspire others. An effective chief academic officer will need to develop the ability and capacity to use symbolic resources in order to lead faculty in community colleges.

CHAPTER 5

COLLABORATION

"Because of the compact nature of the six New England states, as well as the social and economic transparency between them, higher education in New England is better served when we work together than when we go it alone."

Sen. Lou D'Allesandro, NEBHE, 2003

The chief academic officer of a community college is a high-ranking administrator with a unique set of responsibilities. Without an internal peer group within the college to work with, the CAO must turn to peers in other institutions for empathy and shared experience. The extent to which CAOs value and engage in collaboration with their external peers is not known. Four research questions are addressed in this study regarding collaboration among community college chief academic officers:

1. What are the views of chief academic officers with respect to collaboration with other chief academic officers?
2. What are the experiences of chief academic officers with respect to collaboration with other chief academic officers?
3. What factors facilitate or inhibit collaboration among chief academic officers in New England community colleges?
4. Do chief academic officers see increased collaboration as likely for the region?

Five questions were included on the survey exploring chief academic officers' views and experiences with collaboration.

1. Do you consider collaboration with other community college chief academic officers to be valuable for addressing common problems?

2. Do you collaborate with community college chief academic officers in your state?

3. Do you collaborate with community college chief academic officers in the New England region?

4. What factors increase collaboration among chief academic officers?

5. What factors inhibit collaboration among chief academic officers?

Twenty-five chief academic officers responded to the survey questions for a response rate of 62.5%.

Four additional questions on collaboration were asked in the interviews of chief academic officers.

1. What kinds of problems do you think lend themselves to collaboration between chief academic officers?

2. What opportunities have there been for you to meet and interact with chief academic officers within the New England region?

3. If there were opportunities and/or money for CAOs of the community colleges in New England to meet and discuss common problems, to what extent would you be interested in convening with them?

4. In your experience, how is the availability of technology affecting collaboration?

Five chief academic officers representing four of the six states in the New England region were interviewed in the conduct of this study and responded to the questions on collaboration.

CAO Views on Collaboration

Collaboration is valued by chief academic officers serving in New England community colleges. Each CAO who returned the survey considers collaboration with other community college chief academic officers to be an important strategy for addressing challenges.

Table 5.1 Do you consider collaboration with other community college chief academic officers to be valuable for addressing common problems?

YES		NO	
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
25	100%	0	0

Community college chief academic officers value collaboration with their peers for several reasons. The most frequently cited reasons to collaborate with other CAOs include learning from others, enhancing clout, engaging in creative problem-solving, and obtaining emotional support.

Table 5.2 Reasons CAOs value collaboration.

Reasons to collaborate	Frequency	Percentage
Learn from others	22	88%
Enhance clout	7	28%
Creative problem-solving	6	24%
Emotional support	4	16%

The most frequently cited reason to collaborate for chief academic officers is to learn from the experience of others. Eighty-eight percent of CAOs indicated that the opportunity to interact with peers around shared experiences and common challenges is a valuable resource. According to a CAO, "a peer may already have experiences with a problem and thus can share the positive or negative results of action taken." A similar response from another chief academic officer underscores the commonality across

institutions, "The names and faces may be different, but the questions and challenges are often the same."

Collaboration is seen by CAOs as an efficient way of identifying best practices and learning from other's expertise. A chief academic officer suggests that without collaboration, "it takes too long to learn the key past practices and system legends that affect my day-to-day work." Another CAO comments "often others have found solutions to problems I am dealing with." Drawing on another's experiences is a means of quickly surmising the costs and benefits of particular strategies and learning from others mistakes.

A second important reason that CAOs collaborate with peers is to enhance their collective clout and to leverage political influence. Twenty-eight percent of CAOs view collaboration as an efficient way to work together to address systemic forces and to counter balance organized external pressures. For chief academic officers in states with collective bargaining agreements or statewide coordinating agencies, CAOs see an added incentive for working together to solve common problems.

The third most important reason chief academic officers collaborate is to generate creative new ideas and strategies. Twenty-four percent of CAOs find extra value emerges directly from the collective discussions with peers. For example, a representative remark by CAO is "with open discussion, often creative solutions are developed that no one individual would have created." Another suggests that, "collective brainstorming can lead to better results for all participants."

A fourth reason chief academic officers collaborate is the desire for emotional support from peers. Sixteen percent of CAOs included a reference to the importance of

collaborating with empathetic colleagues. In an interview, one chief academic officer represents this view in her personal assessment of meetings with other community college CAOs in her state.

"The meetings are just helpful. Even if all you hear is, oh yes, I know what you are talking about, because there is only one of us on each of our campuses. It's not like when you are a faculty member and you have colleagues within your own department and also within the college in general. There isn't somebody who has the same kind of a job in your own institution. So it's just helpful to have somebody and to have opportunities to talk through issues that are driving you nuts."

CAO Experience with Collaboration

Chief academic officers in community colleges are experienced collaborators. Every chief academic officer who is working in a New England state in which there are multiple community colleges is engaged in some measure of collaboration with CAOs within their state. Ninety-six percent of the community college chief academic officers report collaborating with other CAOs in their state.

Table 5.3 Do you collaborate with community college chief academic officers in your state?

YES		NO	
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
24	96%	1	4%

The impetus for collaboration, the type of collaboration, and the extent of the collaboration among chief academic officers are different for the four New England states with more than one chief academic officer.

In Connecticut, where the community colleges share a common Board of Trustees, chief academic officers "do a lot of collaboration." The Council of Academic Deans meets monthly to discuss "problems or challenges we face at our own colleges"

and "to create policy drafts that are proposed to the Council of Presidents." The Council is not a voluntary association, but rather "a part of our (CAO) jobs." A liaison from the Council of Presidents attends the meeting "to listen and to hear what's going on" as does the chief academic officer of the entire Connecticut system of higher education. According to one Connecticut chief academic officer there has been some tension over the control of the monthly meeting. When asked, "who sets the agenda for the meeting, the chief academic officer replied,

"We do, the deans do. But there is a system office and the chief academic officer comes. Two years ago we decided to have the first hour just us, and you would have thought we were planning something highly subversive. The system office was bent slightly out of shape by that. There's always been a conflict as to whose meeting it truly is. Periodically we reaffirm that it is our meeting and that we share part of the agenda with the system officer."

While the agenda for the monthly chief academic officer meeting in Connecticut is set by the community college CAOs, it is typically a combination of topics that are either campus generated and/or system generated. The meeting may begin with "a discussion amongst us about what kinds of issues we have. This past month we talked about ethics and plagiarism. Those are two things that our plaguing our campuses." But the meetings "often include things the chancellor…the system…the Presidents Council…or that councils under us have asked us to look at. For example, the Librarians Council has come to us with some concerns about the Patriots Act and Privacy."

Some of the many examples of community college collaboration in Connecticut include shared degree programs, a system for giving returning students a "Fresh Start", a common course numbering project, a single standard for academic

probation/suspension, and determining evaluation of online instruction. The chief academic officers in Connecticut "spend a lot of time on the collective bargaining agreement. We're forever discussing nuances of the contract or what the newest thing is that has happened on our campuses and how it played out."

In Massachusetts, chief academic officers of the 15 state-assisted community colleges also meet monthly but not as a result of a system requirement to do so. There is no appointed state system or presidents liaison with the Massachusetts CAOs. The meetings belong to the 15 chief academic officers. The chair of the group rotates annually. Like Connecticut, the Massachusetts chief academic officers move their meetings from campus to campus each month. There is an annual two-day retreat of the chief academic officers.

Statewide faculty and staff unions with a single bargaining agreement, and state Board of Higher Education mandates, are two important factors that drive the need or desire for collaboration by chief academic officers of community colleges in Massachusetts. The collaboration in Massachusetts is often centered on sharing information about how individual campuses have responded to particular issues, events, or demands. Determining the workload for learning communities is an example of a topic that chief academic officers have discussed with each other. Other examples of collaboration in Massachusetts cited by chief academic officers include shared grants, joint lecture series, common faculty development experiences, seamless articulation agreements, co-sponsored conferences and job fairs.

Sometimes the chief academic officers in Massachusetts use collaboration to assert their influence at the policy-making level. Having decided that the academic area

wasn't being listened to in the development of key performance indicators and program review, the CAOs successfully lobbied to have several of their members on the committee. Now a Massachusetts chief academic officer thinks, "we are making a difference in helping to shape that policy."

In addition to working together on statewide, shared concerns, there are also notable intra-state regional collaborations occurring in Massachusetts. Several chief academic officers in the Pioneer Valley, for example, are meeting monthly to share adjunct recruitment, faculty professional development, and to address course and program enrollments. In western Massachusetts, the Cooperating Colleges of Greater Springfield (CCGS) are meeting monthly during the academic year and sponsor a common annual professional development activity.

Chief academic officers in the seven community colleges in the "more tightly coupled system" in Maine are required to meet monthly in the Academic Affairs Council. Although there is "very little overall collaboration", the CAOs in Maine do work together "in solving statewide and system problems." According to one CAO respondent, "we are often pitted against the system that comes up with these arcane rules we are supposed to follow, or procedures, or requests for data. So there's a lot of collaboration on how to undermine that."

Chief academic officers in Maine also work collaboratively. They create "strategies on how to accomplish things and come together around articulation with the university…when there is more power in numbers." Academic initiatives or even mandates from our accrediting bodies…are easier (to implement with faculty) when you provide a context that they aren't the only ones." The one collective bargaining

agreement also presents an opportunity and a purpose for collaboration among Maine's chief academic officers.

Only one chief academic officer from New Hampshire responded to the request to complete the survey. According to the informant, collaboration among the four community college chief academic officers in New Hampshire is limited and amounts to "accreditation teams and transfer articulation agreements".

The New England states of Rhode Island and Vermont have only one community college chief academic officer in the state. Their chief academic officers must cross state borders to collaborate with peers at other community colleges. The one CAO in Rhode Island collaborates with chief academic officers from different sectors within the state, including the university, state colleges, and private institutions. She also maintains relationships with former community college colleagues in a neighboring state.

Whereas all chief academic officers with in-state peers report collaborating with them, less than half of all chief academic officers report they work with out-of-state community college chief academic officers in the New England region. Fifty-six percent of chief academic officers are not currently collaborating with peers from other states within the New England region.

Table 5.4 Do you collaborate with community college chief academic officers in the New England region?

YES		NO	
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
11	44%	14	56%

Most collaboration among the 44% of the CAOs who report collaborating within the New England region occurs in meetings or events organized by regional organizations. Community college chief academic officers participate in Think Tanks sponsored by the New England Regional Council of Higher Education (NERCHE), in discussion groups and joint committees of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), as well as in activities sponsored by the American Council of Education (ACE), the New England Faculty Development Consortium, and the New England College Council.

These formal organizational meetings are opportunities for chief academic officers to work with peers, but they are not necessarily limited to a community college audience. According to one chief academic officer,

"I joined the NERCHE chief academic officer Think Tank… and have also gone to various conferences and meetings at which I worked with other chief academic officers, but they have either not been just community college CAOs or else they have been community college people but not necessarily chief academic officers."

Community college CAOs, who participate in groups that include CAOs from baccalaureate and graduate degree granting institutions, are often reminded of the distinctive characteristics of the community college. One of the CAOs explained the pros and cons of mixed meetings of chief academic officers like this:

"I think it is different when you have a mix of people. Meeting with people from community colleges you do some shorthand conversations and you know what you are talking about. You can talk about how you handle pragmatically certain issues. What I think is interesting about talking with people from different institutions is the broader philosophical discussions of what we are trying to do. As someone who has attended or worked at various levels of institutions, I think that is true of most of us at community colleges, I think we have an understanding of how universities work more than some of them have an understanding of what community colleges are. Not that it's not interesting to talk with them, or that we don't have good things to talk about, but we

sometimes have to spend some time explaining what our situations are....When chief academic officers are from a variety of sectors, it makes the collaboration different because of the different missions."

In addition to collaborating through formal organizational meetings, some chief academic officers report having personal and collegial relationships with individuals within the region that they use informally for discussing common issues. More than one of the chief academic officers related how they sustained contact with colleagues who move out of state. One CAO offered the example of a former colleague, now a chief academic officer from a neighboring state, serving on an advisory board for the college. A chief academic officer observed that since "personal relationships often continue when individuals move to positions in neighboring states, collaborations and discussions often continue as well." Another chief academic officer, recently resettled in a different state within the region, also considers personal relationships to be important for collaboration. In her experience,

"We all know who the good people were in (the state). I don't have that now. It really took years to develop those relationships and that trust. I think too as women coming up in the system, we had a particular stake in each other's careers and were very helpful in both a personal and professional way.... All of my colleagues have retired, everyone is gone that I came up with. Those people I would have picked up the phone and said help me, are gone. I don't have those relationships anymore. There are not a lot of us left. So that's sort of sad, for me to have lost my network."

Factors that influence collaboration

There are numerous factors that influence the extent to which chief academic officers collaborate with each other. Some factors have a positive effect and help to support collaborative relationships. Other factors inhibit collaboration and make it more difficult for chief academic offices to work together.

The factors that New England community college CAOs report as have a positive effect on their mutual collaboration are scheduled meetings, shared concerns, inter-personal relationships, and external forces.. Additional, but less frequently mentioned factors, include financial resources, presidential leadership, and technology.

Table 5.5 Factors that increase collaboration among CAOs

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Meetings	13	52%
Shared concerns	10	40%
Personal relationships	8	32%
External forces	6	24%
Miscellaneous	5	20%

The most important factor supporting collaboration among chief academic officers is the opportunity to gather through regularly scheduled meetings. Fifty-two percent of CAOs indicate that formal organized meetings help to facilitate their contact with peers at other institutions. Workshops, conferences, as well as higher education system meetings offer CAOs the opportunity to get together over shared issues. The scheduling of regular and frequent meetings or activities is seen as critical to addressing common issues and building trust among chief academic officers. In states with tightly coupled higher education systems, CAOs routinely gather to work together on system generated concerns. While episodic opportunities to gather and discuss issues can contribute to collaboration, CAOs explain that it is, "regular meetings and sharing of ideas which help to build personal relationships" over time.

Shared opportunities and common problems also draw chief academic officers together in collaborative relationships according to forty percent of the surveyed CAOs. While each individual community college has a unique set of challenges, these chief

academic officers recognize that community colleges invariably have common concerns and similar issues to resolve.

Thirty-two percent of chief academic officers think that the quality of personal relationships among them is a significant factor in facilitating collaboration. The recognition among chief academic officers that they can learn from each other's talents encourages them to work together. This desire to learn from and share information with colleagues is a necessary precursor to collaboration. The familiarity which develops over time between CAOs leads to a "sense of mutual respect and trust" which is important to the chief academic officers in New England.

External forces are the fourth important factor for facilitating collaboration of community college CAOs. External forces are mandates that originate in entities that have authority or influence over multiple community colleges. Twenty-four percent of CAOs point to mandates from state legislatures, accrediting bodies, higher education offices, and grant funding entities as encouraging collaboration across institutions. External mandates are an especially important factor in states where public coordinating entities dictate higher education policy. Chief academic officers, in these states, are often drawn together to interpret and influence external decision-makers. A statewide union contract, as well as state rules and regulations encourage chief academic officers to work together across institutional and service boundaries.

Twenty percent of chief academic officers included additional factors in their responses that are not previously covered as important for increasing collaboration among chief academic officers. Several CAOs mentioned the significance of the community college president in facilitating collaboration. The leadership, support, and

modeling by community college presidents affect the inclination of some New England chief academic officers to collaborate with others.

The other significant miscellaneous factor identified by CAOs as aiding collaboration is technology. While only two chief academic officers included technology in their survey responses as facilitating this kind of activity, the interviewed CAOs strongly endorsed technology as helping them to work with peers across time and distance. From the interviews, it is clear that the Internet is widely used to seek and distribute information among community college CAOs in New England. One chief academic officer disclosed,

"We're on the Internet together a lot. If someone has an issue on their campus, or if they are trying to address something, like what do you for a workload for learning communities, someone will get on and send a message to all the other chief academic officers and some of us will respond."

Another chief academic officer in a state with a coordinating council remarked,

"a portion of our system website is accessible only to us…where we can post our agendas, minutes, etc. There are list-serves on different topics and the chief academic officers "do a lot through email."

A chief academic officer with limited access to other CAOs thinks,

"It would be helpful to use a (CAO) list-serve because I have all these projects I need done. (With a listserve) I could say, okay, who has expertise. Can you give me the name of a consultant who would help me with this particular project."

But another interviewed chief academic officer exposes the down side of omnipresent informational technology when she shared, "I have two hundred emails a day, so I make it a point not to participate in list-serves." Although, she continues, "in a different situation I probably would."

There are also factors that depress the inclination or capacity of CAOs to work across institutions. The three principal factors that inhibit collaboration among community college chief academic officers are time, distance, and competition.

Table 5.6 Factors that inhibit collaboration among CAOs

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Time	11	44%
Distance	9	36%
Competition	9	36%
Lack of opportunity	4	16%
Resources	3	12%
Miscellaneous	4	16%
	N=25	

A lack of time is the most frequently cited factor that constrains chief academic officers from working together across institutions and across state-lines. Forty-four percent of chief academic officers gave a lack of time as an impediment to collaboration. This is especially significant because CAOs were responding to an open-ended question and had to generate the most salient factors for themselves. The "extreme press of day-to-day crises and business" according to CAOs, often takes precedence over collaboration and joint problem solving. Too often for a New England chief academic officer, an "overly demanding campus work schedule makes attending external events difficult; my calendar seems to leave too little time for my own professional development!"

Physical distance between institutions also has a substantial influence on the amount of contact between community college chief academic officers. The relative small size of the New England region should mean that collaboration could be easier in this region than elsewhere. This was the experience of one CAO who had relocated to

the region, "In New England, the states are small enough that it is pretty easy to travel to see others (not true of other parts of the country I've worked in)." Nevertheless, more than a third of CAOs identified physical distance between institutions as a factor that influences the amount of collaboration. CAOs reported that interstate travel can be especially problematic when there are periodic policies limiting out of state travel by state workers.

Competition is another factor that limits the extent to which CAOs are able or interested in working together. Thirty-six percent of chief academic officers consider competition as a factor that inhibits collaboration among CAOs. A Massachusetts chief academic officer believes there are "risk factors associated with too much honesty...some sense (whether it's real or perceived) that colleges are in competition with one another". There are several sources for the competition. For one chief academic officer, "the main factor here is psychological, a feeling that one's turf needs to be protected". Other CAOs referred to similar concerns, citing "turf wars", "competitive programming", "self-interest", "political posturing", and "ego" as factors that diminish the impetus to collaborate among community colleges. As one chief academic officer explained, "We have service areas, but the students don't."

Sometimes the source of competition is located in decisions of state policy makers. A Massachusetts CAO thinks the "competition caused by Board of Higher Education state-wide ratings do not foster collaboration." In Connecticut a chief academic officer shared that certain legislative initiatives pitted colleges against each other in a scramble for resources and recognition.

Time, distance, and competition are not the only factors that inhibit collaboration among community college chief academic officers. Sixteen percent of chief academic officers cited the lack of opportunity to collaborate as a factor that inhibits joint activity. For these chief academic officers, the reason there isn't more collaboration is because the opportunity to work together hasn't manifested itself. For one chief academic officer, "just getting people together in a room isn't enough. Having specific goals makes a big difference."

Only twelve percent of the CAOs saw a lack of financial resources to be a factor that inhibited their capacity to collaborate with peers. Insufficient travel funds and other budgetary limitations suppress some CAOs' capacity to meet and work with other New England community college chief academic officers but was not a widely shared limitation.

There were two additional factors that only a few chief academic officers identified as having an influence on collaboration. Rather than lose their insights, the two items, presidential influence and institutional culture, are represented as miscellaneous factors. Two CAOs specifically referred to the role of the college president in affecting collaboration with other institutions when responding to the survey. In their experience, "how well the Presidents collaborate with one another," and "how important they (the presidents) view the particular topic/project identified for collaboration", will influence whether collaboration is a priority for a chief academic officer. The "president's view about sharing campus mistakes/successes with other colleges" is important to these chief academic officers and affects their inclination to share information with other CAOs.

The other low frequency factor included by only two of the chief academic officers is related to the difference between institutional cultures. Even when there are recognized common issues and concerns, collaboration can be affected by the idiosyncrasies of values, structures, and processes at individual colleges. In discussing how colleges were responding to a state report, a chief academic officer observed, "We all have the same document. We created the same statement. But we are viewing it in different ways." In this CAO's estimation, "the tricky thing is that we all come from different cultures. The words that I use on my campus or in a meeting to describe what I am talking about may have very different meanings for half of the chief academic officers because the words mean something different on their campus. They are interpreting through their prism." Cultural differences don't make collaboration impossible, but while "there are issues we should be collaborating on, there is the stuff you have to get through in order to be able to collaborate."

Analysis

Collaboration is an important part of the chief academic officer position in community colleges in New England. There is unanimous support among CAOs in community colleges for seeking advice and counsel from peers. Collaboration is valuable to chief academic officers for emotional reasons, for identifying best practices, and for generating new ideas.

Intra-state collaboration is frequent in New England states with multiple public community colleges. In states like Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maine, with collective bargaining, state funding appropriations, and higher education governing

bodies, collaboration is valuable for political reasons. Examples of intra-state collaboration include shared programs and common standards.

Regional collaboration is less common and more difficult than other forms of interaction. Most regional collaboration is either facilitated by a formal organization that coordinates opportunities for higher education administrators and faculty to work together or is a result of personal relationships. Intra-regional collaboration typically encompasses administrators from different sectors of higher education and therefore has limitations as an opportunity for community college chief academic officers to work together on common issues.

Collaboration among chief academic officers in community colleges in New England is facilitated by, among other things, compelling purpose, shared accreditation standards, industry and regional needs, and specific funding opportunities. Like-minded CAOs who respect, trust, and value each other are more likely to seek out their peers for collaborative projects. Routine opportunities to meet and work together are a major factor in building relationships conducive to collaboration.

The broad introduction of technology has had a substantial impact on facilitating communication among chief academic officers. The availability of websites, listserves, and email means that CAOs can routinely benefit from the opinions, experiences, and ideas of their peers.

No single factor detracts from effective collaboration among chief academic officers. Limited time, substantial distance, and tight resources are among the reasons that CAOs are unable to engage in collaborative activities and projects. Competition between individual institutions is also present and at odds with a collaborative *ethos*.

Cooperation among CAOs is also influenced by the behavior and attitudes of community college presidents. When a president is perceived as valuing cooperation, a chief academic officer is more likely to incorporate collaboration into their set of strategies for accomplishing goals.

Although community colleges largely share a common mission and purpose, there are nevertheless important distinctions between individual institutions. Even slight differences in how institutions interpret values, create structures, and implement processes may make interaction between chief academic officers frustrating and fraught with misunderstanding. Experience and patience over time is needed to build relationships that allow for successful translation between the cultures of individual community colleges.

According to the findings of this study, valuing and practicing collaboration around shared concerns is highly dependent on the amount of interaction and the quality of the relationships that develop among chief academic officers. In order for CAOs to collaborate, there needs to be a level of interaction between them. The level of interaction can range from the impersonal to the personal. Impersonal interaction is the easiest and most frequent type of engagement among administrators. Modern technology has made this type of interaction among chief academic officers quick, efficient, and cost-effective. The phone, fax, and list-serve are a communication tool that conveys information between and among CAOs with little effort.

Engagement between chief academic officers becomes more personal as interaction increases. Face to face interaction that occurs over a period of time cultivates personal and professional relationships. New England chief academic officers

consider meetings to be a prime factor in facilitating collaboration. The importance of regularly scheduled meetings is that in these settings, chief academic officers, through their conversation and discussion, can identify shared concerns, both individual and systemic. At the same time the meetings provide the possibility of genuine understanding and respect among CAOs. Consequently, stable groups of people who interact over time increase their potential to discover new and unforeseen opportunities to work together to accomplish shared goals.

The findings produced in this study were used to construct a model to help clarify collaboration among chief academic officers in community colleges. The model can be used to illustrate collaborative activity at a particular point in time, or over time. It can also be used to plot collaboration among chief academic officers within a state or across states within a region. Finally, it can be used to predict collaboration, when levels of engagement and concerns are known.

Figure 5.1 provides the basic model. It indicates two critical components of collaboration between academic leaders – engagement and challenges. Engagement, the first axis of the model, refers to the amount and quality of the relationship among chief academic officers. In the case of impersonal engagement, there is limited interaction between CAOs or the interaction is primarily mediated through impersonal conduits. As interaction increases and becomes more personal, authentic engagement increases.

The second axis depicts the primary challenges of the chief academic officer. At one end of the axis, the CAOs challenges are rooted in their own institution and are important to the individual chief academic officer. At the other end of the axis, challenges are shared and are of mutual importance to other chief academic officers. To

the extent that chief academic officers have mutual challenges with other CAOs, and are involved in personal engagement with them, the greater the potential and probability of collaboration to be used as a leadership strategy by them.

The model indicates that collaboration reaches its full potential when engagement among individuals is personal and the challenges they face are mutual rather than individual.

Figure 5.1. Collaboration: A function of engagement and challenges

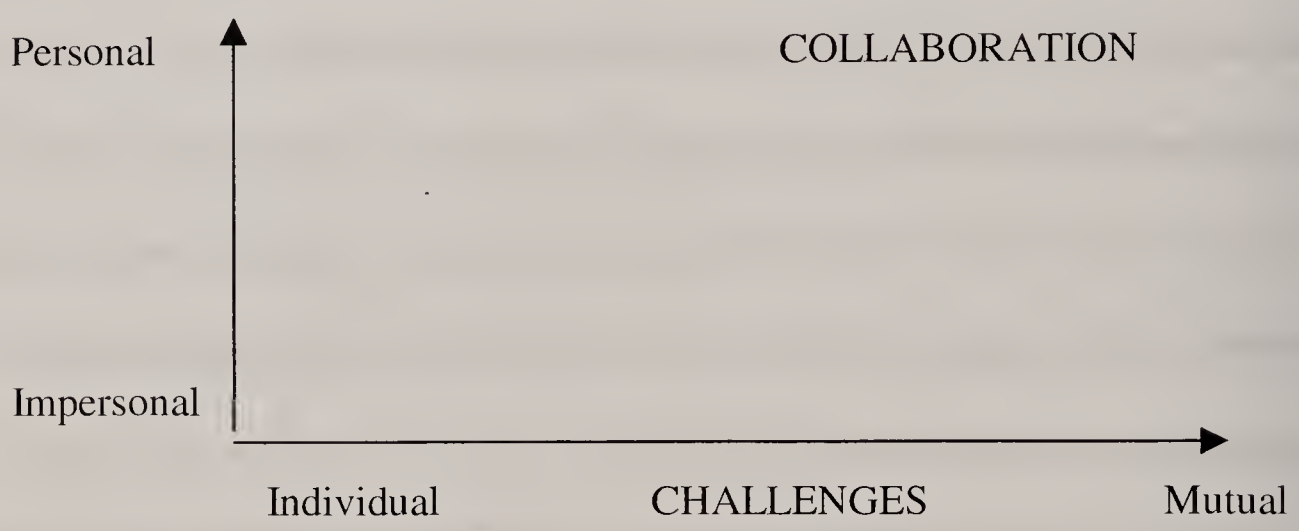


Figure 5.2 uses the model to illustrate the collaboration among chief academic offices in each of the New England states. Drawing on data collected in this study, the approximate extent of collaboration among chief academic officers is plotted. Each state is positioned in the figure on the basis of information about the amount of engagement among chief academic officers within the state and their perspective on challenges.

Figure 5.2. Collaboration among CAOs within six New England states

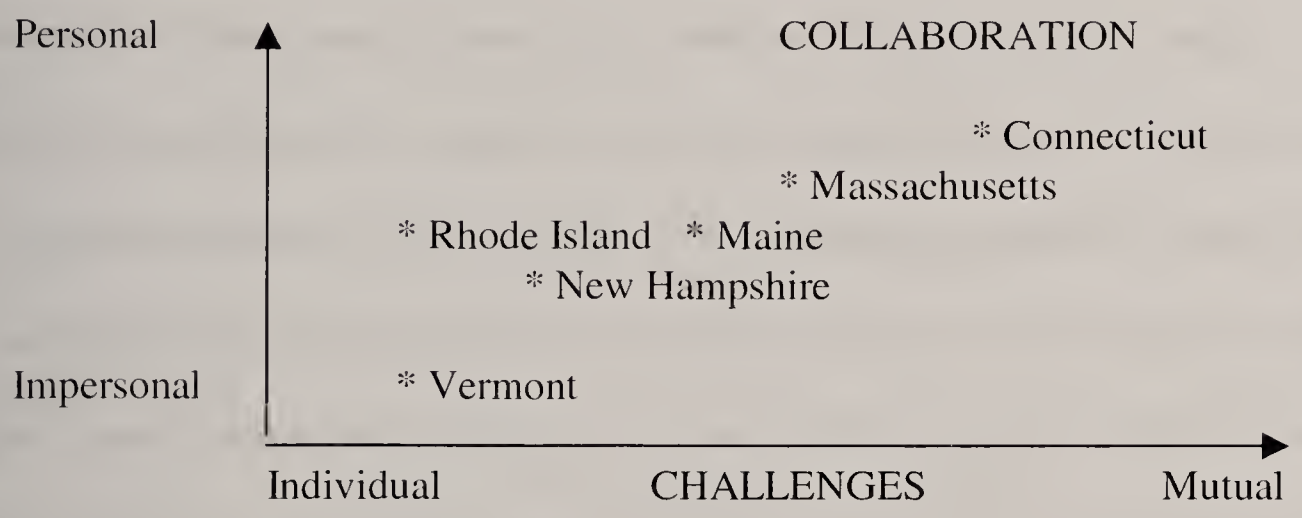


Figure 5.2 represents the states of Connecticut and Massachusetts as having the richest examples of collaboration among chief academic officers in New England. Both states have multiple community colleges that are connected through state level decision-making. Centralized higher education policies and faculty labor contracts are just two of the mutual challenges that the chief academic officers in these states share with each other.

There is also a high level of personal engagement among the CAOs in Connecticut and Massachusetts. They have ongoing contact through websites and listserves, and meet regularly as an important part of their educational roles. These scheduled meetings enable CAOs to develop personal relationships with each other, and ensure that they focus on mutual challenges among the community colleges in a state network.

Given their sustained and personal engagement with each other, coupled with a set of mutual challenges, the chief academic officers in Connecticut and Massachusetts are engaged in collaborative relationship within their individual states. In the model,

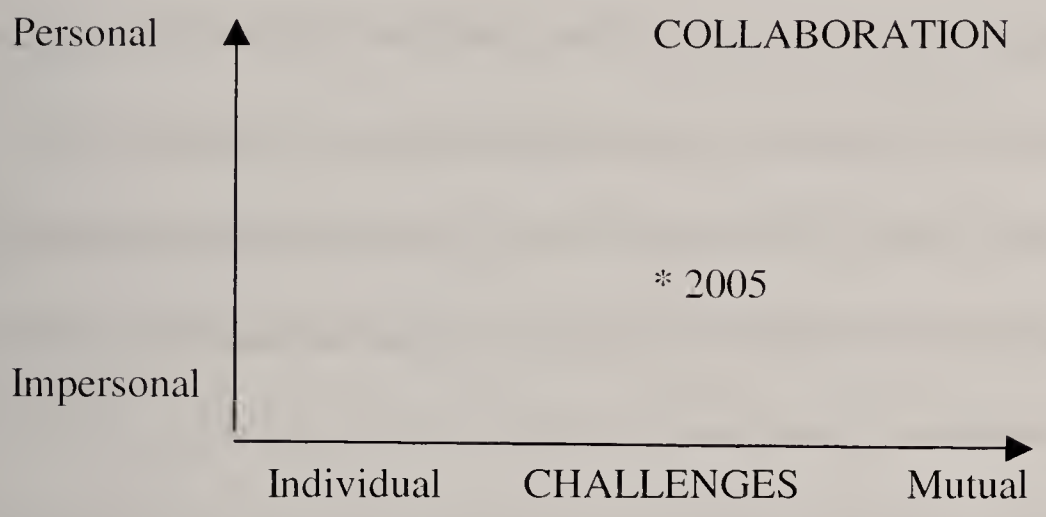
Massachusetts and Connecticut are depicted as being the closest to a collaborative situation.

Figure 5.2 represents collaboration in the states of Maine and New Hampshire to be less developed than in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Although these states also have multiple community colleges and some degree of state coordination among institutions, there is a less amount of routine interaction among the chief academic officers. Unlike community college CAOs in Connecticut and Massachusetts, neither CAOs in Maine, nor CAOs in New Hampshire, are routinely brought together to address common challenges. The amount of engagement reported among chief academic officers in either state is not very robust. Chief academic officers in Maine and New Hampshire report a limited amount of collaboration occurring in each state.

The CAOs in Vermont and Rhode Island have even less opportunity to interact with other chief academic officers. The challenge for someone who serves as a lone chief academic officer in a small state is to move beyond impersonal engagement with CAOs in neighboring states, to find shared challenges that transcend specific and local needs. The chief academic officers in Vermont and Rhode Island have to work much harder to overcome the limitations of their isolation in order to work with their peers in New England.

Figure 5.3 uses the model to shift the focus to the regional level.

Figure 5.3 Collaboration among community college CAOs in New England region



According to the chief academic officers in this study, there are few ongoing opportunities for chief academic officers to develop a level of personal engagement with their peers within the New England region. The personal engagement which does exist is typically attributed to relationships that were originally cultivated within a state system and continued when a chief academic officer remains in contact with friends and former colleagues after leaving the state. In circumstances when personal engagement is elevated by the presence of individually cultivated networks, there is limited potential for collaboration, so long as the challenges faced by chief academic officers are seen as idiosyncratic and not mutually shared.

At the same time that individual chief academic officers are creating and sustaining relationships with peers within New England, there are associations and organizations in the region convening chief academic officers on shared challenges. These connections however tend to be too sporadic to develop or strengthen interpersonal relationships between chief academic officers. Without increasing levels

of personal engagement, the identification of shared challenges alone also fails to promote collaboration.

Figure 5.3 suggests that two things will need to occur in order to raise the level of collaboration among chief academic officers in New England: 1) The level of interaction among chief academic officers will need to become more personal; and 2) The level of awareness of shared mutual challenges among chief academic officers in community colleges will need to increase.

The implications of these findings for raising the level of collaboration among chief academic officers in New England community colleges are explored in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 6

PROFILE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS IN NEW ENGLAND

A significant amount of data has been reported on the experience and demographic characteristics of administrators in community colleges. The information is usually reported on a national level and may obscure regional differences. This study adds to prior research studies (Vaughan, 1990; Anderson, 2002) by posing the research question: What is the profile of chief academic officers in New England community colleges?

The survey instrument included ten questions related to the administrative experience and demographic characteristics of chief academic officers serving in the public community colleges in New England.

1. How many years of managerial experience (department head or higher) in higher education do you have?
2. How many years have you worked for your current employer?
3. How many years have you been employed in your current position?
4. What position did you hold immediately prior to becoming a chief academic officer?
5. How many individuals report directly to you?
6. Please check the following areas that report to you as the chief academic officer.

___Non-credit courses ___Student activities ___Business & Industry ___Community education

7. Age
8. Gender
9. Race/Ethnicity
10. Highest degree earned

Twenty-five surveys were returned for a response rate of 62.5%. Any missing or ambiguous information was clarified with the interviewed chief academic officers. There were no additional profile questions included in the interview protocol.

CAO Demographics

The typical demographic profile of chief academic officers in community colleges includes age, gender, ethnicity, and educational attainment. For comparison purposes with other profile studies of chief academic officers, CAOs were asked to report on their individual characteristics. Of the 25 responding chief academic officers, two omitted their age, and one omitted their ethnicity on the survey instrument.

The average age of responding chief academic officers is 54.78. The age of chief academic officers in New England ranges from 42 to 64 years old. The median age of chief academic officers is between 55.5.

Table 6.1 Age of CAOs in New England community colleges

	Frequency	Percentage
< 50 years old	5	22%
51-59 years old	11	48%
60 - 64	7	30%
	N=23 (2 non-respondents)	100%

The majority of chief academic officers currently serving in New England community colleges are women. Fifty-six percent of the survey respondents are women. Women are on average younger than their male counterparts serving as chief academic officers in New

England. The average age of the 11 male responders is 56.45. The average age of the 14 female responders is 53.3. Both the youngest and the oldest chief academic officers are male.

Table 6.2 Gender of CAOs in New England community colleges

	Frequency	Percentage
Females	14	56%
Males	11	44%
	N=25	100%

One individual declined to answer the race/ethnicity item on the survey. Of the 24 respondents who provided race/ethnicity information on the survey, 22 self-reported as white/Caucasian; one self-identified as an African-American; and one self-identified as Asian.

Table 6.3 Ethnicity of CAOs in New England community colleges

	Frequency	Percentage
Caucasian	22	92%
African American	1	4%
Asian	1	4%
	N= 24	100%

The highest education credential held by chief academic officers is a doctorate. Forty percent of chief academic officers in community colleges in New England hold a Doctor of Philosophy, Ph.D., degree. Seven of the chief academic officers hold a Doctorate in Education, Ed.D. Eight of the CAOs have a Master of Science, a Master of Arts, or a Master of Education.

Table 6.4 Highest degree earned by CAOs in New England community colleges

	Frequency	Percentage
Ph.D.	10	40%
Ed.D.	7	28%
M.A., M.S., M.Ed.	8	32%
	N=25	100%

CAO Administrative Experience

In order to assess the leadership role of chief academic officers in New England community colleges, the survey instrument included a series of question about CAO career history and the scope of their responsibilities.

The average number of years of managerial experience (department head or higher) for CAOs in New England community colleges is 19.84. The range is from a low of 3 years to a high of 35 years. Only five chief academic officers in New England have less than 10 years of managerial experience. Five CAOs reported between 10 and 19 years as managers. Eleven chief academic officers had accumulated between 20 and 29 years of experience and four CAOs had 30 or more years of managerial experience. The median for years of managerial experience of chief academic officers in New England is 20.

Table 6.5 Frequency distribution of managerial experience of New England CAOs

	Frequency	Percentage
<10 years	5	20%
10-19 years	5	20%
20-29 years	11	44%
30+ years	4	16%
	N=25	100%

The majority of chief academic officers serving in New England community colleges have been working for their current employer for less than 10 years. The average number of years chief academic officers in New England have worked for their current employer is 10.7. The range is from less than a year to 35 years. The median number of years chief academic officers have been working for a current employer is 6.

Table 6.6 Frequency distribution of CAOs years with current employer

	Frequency	Percentages
0-5 years	8	32%
6-10 years	9	36%
11-15 years	0	0%
16-20 years	4	16%
21-25 years	1	4%
26-30 years	1	4%
30 years+	2	8%
	N=25	100%

Most chief academic officers in New England community colleges have served in the position for two years or less. The median number of years that chief academic officers have been serving in their current position is two. The number of years CAOs have been in their current position ranges from less than a year to 28 years. The average number of years a current chief academic officer in a community college in New England has served in their current position is 4.16 years. There has been significant turnover in the CAO position in community colleges in New England over the past several years.

Table 6.7 Frequency distribution of CAOs years in current position

	Frequency	Percentage
2 years or less	13	52%
2 1/2 - 5	4	16%
6-8	7	28%
> 8	1	4%
	N=25	100%

The title of an administrative position in a community colleges depends on the state system in which one is working. The administrative structure in community colleges is not consistent between the six states in New England. There are a variety of organizational structures operating in New England community colleges. Massachusetts, for example, the chief academic officer is a Vice President of Academic Affairs and Deans are the direct reports to the CAO. In Connecticut, the CAO is the Dean of Academic Affairs and the direct reports have the title of Director or Department Chair.

The most commonly held position, immediately prior to becoming a chief academic officer in New England, is Dean, Assistant or Associate Dean. Forty-eight percent of New England community college CAOs are promoted from a Dean's position to chief academic officer. Twenty percent of chief academic officers are hired from a Director or Department Chair position. A combined 68% of chief academic officers in New England community colleges are serving as the administrator of a single component of the academic program prior to their appointment as CAO.

Three CAOs in New England community colleges made lateral moves to the chief academic officer position or were already working as a close associate to the sitting CAO.

Table 6.8 Frequency distribution of titles associated with prior position

Title	Frequency	Percentage
Vice President or Asst. CAO	3	13%
Associate, Assistant, Dean	12	50%
Director	5	21%
Department Chair	2	8%
Outside Academia	2	8%
Directly from Faculty	0	0%
	N = 24	100%

A common indicator of the scope of responsibility associated with an administrative position is the number of individuals who report to it. The survey asked chief academic officers in New England community colleges to indicate how many individuals report directly to them.

CAOs indicated that the number of individuals who report directly to them ranges from five to 100, with an average number of direct reports to a CAO as 27.

The substantial range among chief academic officer direct reports suggests that some CAOs included the entire faculty in a community college as direct reports. While CAOs are by title and position responsible for all faculty in a community college, it is more accurate to view the CAO as the direct supervisor of the individuals who serve as mid-level managers between the CAO and the teaching faculty. Sixty-eight percent reported 20 or fewer individuals as direct reports, which seems to be the more accurate estimation of the direct reports to CAOs, given the relative size of community colleges in New England.

One indicator of the complexity of the chief academic officer position in community colleges is reflected in the number or types of programs that report to the CAO. By definition a chief academic officer is in charge of the credit-bearing curriculum and the faculty in community colleges. In addition this core responsibility, some chief academic officers are also assigned oversight of additional components of the college mission. The scope of responsibilities attached to the CAO position in a community college can be substantially different from institution to institution.

Table 6.9 Program areas reporting to CAO in addition to academic area

Program	Frequency	Percentage
Community Education	15	60%
Non-credit	13	52%
Student Activities	4	32%

In addition to their core responsibilities, sixty percent of chief academic officers in New England community college are also responsible for the oversight of community education. More than half are in charge of both credit and non-credit experiences produced and delivered by the community college. Almost half of the CAOs in New England are also assigned responsibility for business and industry programming produced by their institutions. Sixteen percent of CAOs are "double deans" and oversee both the academic program and the student activities areas of the college. Sixty-eight percent of chief academic officers in New England have at least one program area reporting to them in addition to their core responsibilities. Almost half, 49%, of the CAOs have at least three additional responsibilities.

Analysis

Demographic profiles of chief academic officers in community colleges are reported in published literature and can be compared to identify trends, elucidate hiring practices, and to track changes over time for academic administrators. There are several published profiles that can be usefully compared to this study. The following chart summarizes key components of published national demographic profiles of chief academic officers in community colleges. There is wide variation in the size of the research population and in the response rates of the various studies. The 62.5% response rate of this study is higher than four of the six studies reported here. All of the research findings reported in the following table are national studies except for Edington (2005), which is a regional study.

Table 6.10 Comparison of community college CAO demographic profiles

	Pop. Size	Response Rate	% Male	% White	Mean Age	% Doctorate	Mean Years in CAO office
Edington 2005	40	62.5%	44%	92%	54.78	68%	4.16 years
Anderson 2002	250	73.6%	59.2%	N/A	52.5	N/A	5.4 years
McKenny Cejda, 2000	628	59%	61%	88%	52.46	76%	6 years
Murray, Murray, 2000	250	48%	59.8%	N/A	52.9	68.4%	5 years or less
Hawthorne 1994	1243	57%	74%	88%	50	66%	6 years
Vaughan 1990	1169	53%	79%	93%	49	70%	5 years
Moore, *et al* 1985	1219	78%	84%	95%	49	89%	6 years

The profile of chief academic officers in community colleges has changed in the period between 1985 and 2005. The most striking difference is in the gender distribution of chief academic officers. In 1985, 84 % of community college chief academic officers serving nationally in community colleges were male. In 2002, the national percentage had fallen to less than 60% male. By 2005 in New England, only 44% of CAOs are men, which is substantially different from the national average of 59.2% reported by Anderson as late as 2002.

The ethnic makeup of individuals in the chief academic officer position in community colleges nationally has changed over the past twenty years, albeit not as dramatically as it has in gender. Between 1985 and 2000, there has been a seven percent increase in non-whites serving

as chief academic officers in community colleges. There has been less progress in diversifying the ethnic representation in the position in New England where 92% of CAOs are white.

The average age of CAOs in community colleges has increased slightly over the past two decades. In 1985 and 1990, the average age of CAOs on a national level was 49. Several studies from 2000 and 2002 indicate the average age of a chief academic officer in a community college had risen to slightly higher than 52 years old. New England chief academic officers in 2005, in comparison are on average almost 55 years old.

Moore, *et al* in 1985, benchmarked the percentage of chief academic officers in community colleges nationally holding a doctorate degree at 89%. The percentage of those with a doctorate slipped considerably in subsequent research reported by Vaughan (1990) and Hawthorne (1994). By 2000, Murray and Murray, and McKenny and Cejda, report higher figures for CAOs with doctorates but still not close to the level set in 1985. This research identified 68% of chief academic officers with a doctorate. These results are virtually identical to the 68.4% reported by Murray and Murray in 2000, but still under the 76% which McKenny and Cejda found in their 2000 study.

The mean number of years a chief academic officer has served in the position has stayed fairly constant in 20 years. In 1985, chief academic officers in community colleges had on average, served six years in their position. Subsequent studies show the average years in that role remaining the same or fluctuating no more than a full year. The fact that New England community college chief academic officers have only served 4.16 years in their offices, suggests that there has been significant turnover in the position and a surge of new hires in the region.

Very few research studies of chief academic officers have been done on a regional basis. Most research on chief academic officers is reported on a national level. Only Anderson (2002) reported findings that can be usefully compared with this study. The following chart summarizes the data collected by the two studies.

Table 6.11 Comparison of New England region profiles of CAOs in community colleges

	Pop. Size	Response Rate	% Male	% White	Mean Age	% Doctorate	Mean Years in CAO office
Edington 2005	40	62.5%	44%	92%	54.78	68%	4.16 years
Anderson 2002	15	66.6%	70%	N/A	54.5	N/A	5.5 years

Anderson's results are part of a larger national study he completed on chief academic officers in community college. He selected a purposeful sample of the New England region to compare with other geographic regions in the nation. This research uses the entire population of New England community college chief academic officers. The response rates of the two regional profiles are comparable, with Anderson's response rate just under 3% higher.

The most dramatic difference in the findings is in the gender of the respondents. In 2002, Anderson reported that 70% of the CAOs in New England community colleges were male. In 2005, this study, with a larger number of reporting chief academic officers, the percentage of male CAOs had fallen to less than fifty percent. The striking difference in the percentages could reflect significant turnover in the CAO position in New England over the past several years with women as the predominant new hires. There could also be a sampling error in Anderson's data given the small size of the research population in New England and the difficulty of getting a representative sample from a small number of respondents.

The only other pieces of data that Anderson collected, that are comparable with this study are age and years in office. Anderson did not ask for ethnicity or educational credentials in his work. In respect to age, this study and Anderson are nearly identical. Anderson in 2002 reported the average age of chief academic officers in New England to be 54.5; two years older than the national average he reported in the same study. Similarly, this study finds the mean age of chief academic officers in New England to be 54.78, only slightly higher than Anderson's regional figure.

In Anderson's 2002 national study, the mean years in office for CAOs was 5.4 years. According to Anderson's regional sample, chief academic officers serving in New England community colleges had been serving for just over 5.5 years. This study reports that CAOs serving in New England in 2005 have on average been serving for 4.16 years in office. These comparative figures suggest that there has been considerable turnover at the CAO level in New England community colleges. They also lend support to the idea that the change in the distribution of gender in the region is a result of a majority of women being hired as CAOs through the new postings.

There has been a shift in the makeup of senior administrative leadership in community colleges in New England. In the not too distant past, the majority of community college chief academic officers were male. Today in New England, chief academic officers in community colleges are predominately female, white, in their mid-fifties, and hold a doctorate. The data produced in this study also indicate that New England CAOs are seasoned community college educators with a wealth of administrative experience. Most chief academic officers work their way up the administrative hierarchy and are hired from mid-level management positions in community colleges. They do not necessarily start and complete their careers in a single

college, but the data indicates a fairly stable workforce. Sixty-eight percent of New England community college CAOs have been with their current employer for at least six years.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on leadership in community colleges by expanding the research lens beyond the chief executive office. The position of chief academic officer is recognized as an important leadership role in community colleges which deserves its own research agenda. This preliminary study explores and describes the views and experiences as leaders and collaborators of chief academic officers in New England community colleges.

This study focuses on the 40 public community colleges located in the geographic area encompassing the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. A regional perspective was selected because of shared accreditation standards, geographic, economic and political realities, and the potential for collaboration among community colleges.

The survey and interview data provides rich descriptions of leadership behavior and understandings of the individuals who lead the academic programs of New England community colleges. It also identifies collaboration among community college CAOs within a region as a viable and valuable leadership strategy.

Leadership

Chief academic officers in New England community colleges have important and challenging jobs. As the titular leaders of the central mission of teaching and learning in the community college, chief academic offices are primarily concerned with

curriculum and faculty. CAOs are increasingly called upon to advocate and secure resources to support the academic mission.

As leaders, chief academic officers influence the development of the college vision, the structure and process of working relationships within the academic area of an institution, and the range and quality of programming. CAOs primarily work with a team of direct reports who in turn interact directly with faculty to accomplish academic goals and objectives. An important aspect of a CAO role, and a source of job satisfaction for chief academic officers, is developing and sustaining relationships between individuals and groups within the college.

Chief academic officers in community colleges are most effective and most validated as leaders when they are helping to facilitate the goals and accomplishments of students and faculty.

Collaboration

Chief academic officers view collaboration as a positive behavior and an effective strategy for addressing common problems. Chief academic officers in New England community colleges are also experienced collaborators. Intra-state collaboration is a well-established strategy and important element in a chief academic officer's job in most New England states. There is some, but not extensive, collaboration occurring between chief academic officers in different New England states.

Two main factors have been found to affect collaboration among chief academic officers in New England community colleges. The amount and quality of communication among chief academic officers is one important factor; the presence or

lack of recognition of mutual interests is another. Generally speaking, when communication between CAOs is regular and authentic and there is a shared recognition of the presence of prevailing mutual interests, there is an increased predilection to collaborate among chief academic officers.

The impetus to collaborate should originate with chief academic officers but it can be facilitated by external agencies. State, federal, and regional organizations influence the amount and substance of collaboration of chief academic officers. The extensive availability of communication technology is also an important factor, although it is most effective in buttressing relationships that are built and sustained through face-to-face interaction. Heavy workloads and pressing business can inhibit collaboration by interrupting regular and ongoing interaction between chief academic officers.

Collaboration among chief academic officers is likely if external mandates demand it, regional organizations facilitate it, technology is available to support it, and chief executive officers encourage it. Future collaboration is likely provided there is both internal and external motivation and support encouraging cooperation among community colleges.

CAO Profile

The profile of chief academic officers serving in New England community colleges is typically white, female, mid-fifties, and holds a doctorate. She is an experienced administrator with more than ten years of managerial experience. The New England community college CAO has on average served less than five years in the position. In comparison with national profiles of community college CAOs, a higher percentage of New England community college chief academic officers are white, a

much higher percentage are female, and they are more recent appointments to the CAO position.

Implications

There are several implications related to the findings on leadership in this study. The chief academic officer position, for one, should be recognized as a critical leadership role in community colleges. Chief academic officers in New England community colleges do see themselves as occupying a critical leadership role that has important ramifications for the achievement of the academic mission. CAOs are important to their institutions in a number of ways. They oversee the central mission of teaching and learning. They have a major influence on the structure and processes that impact the development and implementation of academic programs. The manner in which they work with faculty contributes to the vision and overall culture of a community college.

The chief academic officer position is also challenging. The scope of responsibilities is large and growing. The increasing demands for accountability and diversity in higher education are felt keenly by individuals in the CAO position. There is too much to do and insufficient time and resources with which to do it. Nevertheless, chief academic officers are overall satisfied and energized by their roles.

There are also several implications of the findings on collaboration in this study. It is now clear that chief academic officers in New England are active collaborators and express real enthusiasm for the process. Chief academic offices in Connecticut and Massachusetts, in particular, are setting a strong example of the value of chief academic officers working together on shared challenges. From their experiences we can isolate

and extrapolate the forces that facilitate collaboration among academic leaders. The more that can be done to foster communication and to cultivate shared challenges, the more potential there is that chief academic officers will work together to generate opportunities and to solve problems.

The New England region is a natural grouping for collaboration given its relatively small size, shared culture, existence of regional and national organizations, and similar geography, political, and economic features. There is much that can be done to offer more opportunities for cooperation within the region. More opportunities are especially important for chief academic officers in Rhode Island and Vermont since they are without a peer group within the state.

There are also several implications for leadership and collaboration stemming from the profile developed of chief academic officers in community colleges in the New England region. New England can be proud of the fact that so many women are chief academic officers in the region and that they lead the nation in this area. The record on diversity by race/ethnicity is not so impressive though and needs dedicated attention. The same openness and inclinations which enabled women to compete for senior administrative positions may also be effective for increasing the diversity of chief academic officers.

The similarity of the chief academic officers in New England may on the surface facilitate complex communication and mutual interests among CAOs, the two factors that have been identified as facilitating collaboration. But on the other hand, the absence of diversity can affect the breadth of information, knowledge, and experience that is available to a working group of CAOs. Without diverse representation in the

leadership positions, it is possible that the chief academic officers will be less able to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse student body. When chief academic officers are working together in a region, a small number of diverse individuals can have a substantial impact across multiple institutions.

Since it appears that there is turnover in the chief academic officer position, this is an especially good time to make collaboration one of the important points of discussion with applicants and newly hired CAOs. By valuing it in the hiring process, the potential for a chief academic officer to subsequently view such activity as a priority will be heightened.

Recommendations

For the more than 100 years of their contribution to higher education in the United States, community colleges have relied almost exclusively on the leadership of chief executive officers. Individuals, mostly white men, who led the establishment and development of the community college movement have dominated in the colleges and in the research on leadership. Now, however, a new millennium has begun, and the demands on community colleges have intensified. Higher education has changed and so has the need for expanding leadership throughout community colleges.

There is extensive potential for leadership in the position of chief academic officer in community colleges provided there is support for leadership development and growth. Chief academic officers should be recognized as important partners in setting and implementing the vision of community colleges. Not just a "pathway to the presidency," the CAO role should be recognized as a destination in its own right.

Leadership takes time and effort by individuals. It is essential that the CAO role not be overly burdened with mundane and routine management tasks to the detriment of leading. It is important to structure realistic workloads for chief academic officers to lead.

Because collaboration with other chief academic officers is a fertile strategy for leveraging scarce resources, including time and energy, it is also important that chief academic officers be supported in their desire and need to collaborate with peers. It will be necessary to provide financial and technology resources to facilitate both face-to-face and virtual interaction among chief academic officers in community colleges within the state and region.

Several recommendations for increasing and improving collaboration are possible. At a minimum, information and strategies for facilitating it should be included in leadership institutes, trainings, and programs for all community college leaders. It is important to establish collaboration among community colleges as a valued activity that is supported by governing boards, presidents, chief academic officers, faculty and all other community college stakeholders.

Regional organizations, such as NEASC and NEBHE, could play a greater leadership role in fostering collaborative relationships within community colleges. They could maintain and distribute accurate lists of individuals employed as chief academic officers in New England community colleges and convene CAOs as part of their annual meetings. Through publications, financial support, and recognition, regional organizations could help in the understanding of challenges identified by CAOs in New England community colleges. They could also help disseminate best practice

information among the states in the region, or help bring information from the national to regional level and vice versa.

National organizations such as the American Association of Community Colleges could incorporate regional events into annual conferences as an opportunity for academic administrators to gather and promote networking. State-based organizations could work to foster interstate and regional communication and activities as part of their agenda. And all organizations can promote collaborative projects through external recognition and awards at institutional, state, regional, and national levels.

Thus national, regional and state based organizations can play a role in fostering collaboration among chief academic officers. It is essential that all three levels of organization commit to the value of collaboration and work strategically to support the development of intersecting linkages among community colleges. Chief academic officers are a leadership group within community colleges that are motivated to collaborate with their peers on shared challenges and could be influenced by the direction of state, regional and national organizations.

Finally, community colleges have not yet achieved their goals in respect to diversifying the faculty and administrative roles. It is incumbent upon individual institutions and the community college movement, as a whole, to continue to discuss and act on recommendations to identify and cultivate a more diverse workforce. Chief academic officers themselves can be the catalyst for increasing diversity, as they, perhaps more than any other position, are largely responsible for the composition and development of the faculty in community colleges. It will be much easier to diversify at

the senior administrative level in community colleges, once the ranks of the faculty have been transformed.

Regional collaboration could also prove to be an effective strategy for addressing diversity. A region united to attract and retain diverse faculty and staff might be more successful in discovering and recruiting talent than individual institutions making the attempt on their own.

There is a pressing need for additional research on leadership, particularly chief academic officers as leaders in community colleges. Demographic profiles of chief academic officers should be continuously updated and analyzed for trends and patterns. While national profiles will always be useful, there should be growing utility for having demographic profiles of CAOs in community colleges collected and analyzed by geographic regions.

The literature on chief academic officers in community colleges would benefit from a range of qualitative research studies that explore in more depth the parameters and nuances of this important role. Starting those leadership studies now will provide useful comparisons in the future as the role of the chief academic officer continues to evolve and grow.

In addition to focusing the research agenda on the leadership role of chief academic officers, there is also a need to work on the topic of collaboration. While teams and teamwork within institutions is clearly on the research agenda, there are limited examinations of collaboration. An important starting point for future studies is to ask chief academic officers what collaboration means to them and how they define the term. This stdy began with the assumption that there was a shared understanding

of the term. Information gathered in this research suggests that there is a range of activities that chief academic officers associate with collaboration.

There would be value in looking at case studies of collaboration between community colleges, and an effort made to deconstruct the elements that contributed to the partnership. Similarly, examinations of failed collaboration could provide additional insights into the factors that diminish the collaborative impulse of leaders.

In conclusion, regional groupings are an important level of analysis and ought to be more available in the research literature. Paying closer attention to the dynamics within geographic regions would be valuable for community colleges and a whole range of other organizations. Research on the impact of regional organizations on fostering relationships between leaders in higher education would be an important step in launching a body of work on regional collaboration.

Community colleges are the introduction to post secondary education for more than half of all students who begin college in the United States. Chief academic officers are pivotal in the development and implementation of the teaching and learning that is accomplished there. CAO leadership is critical to the continuing growth and value of community colleges to society. Chief academic officers will need a full complement of leadership strategies to do their jobs well. Collaboration among chief academic officers looks to be a particularly effective tool for CAOs to use in their increasingly complex jobs. When communication between chief academic officers is fostered, and there is a mutual understanding of shared interests between them, the potential to realize the synergy of collaborative effort can be realized. Instead of an impending leadership crisis in community colleges, there may instead be an impending explosion of talent and

creative energy beginning with chief academic officers bent on collaborating with their peers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

July 22, 2004

Dear :

For 18 years I have been both a faculty member and an administrator in a community college. I highly value the contribution that our institutions make to students, the community, and the overall well-being of our society. I am also a doctoral student working on my dissertation under the direction of Dr. Pat Crosson in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I am writing to request your assistance on my research.

The purpose of my study is to examine chief academic officers as leaders in community colleges and to explore their views on collaboration as a strategy for addressing common issues and problems. My research is specifically focused on the chief academic officers serving in public community colleges in the New England states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island.

Although the chief academic officer is one of the most challenging and demanding positions in a community college, there is relatively little research on this important role. With your input, this study will help address a gap in our understanding about a critical community college leadership role. Knowledge gained from this research could provide information and support to current chief academic officers, provide guidance to individuals aspiring to the chief academic officer position, direction to programs preparing community college administrators, and information to individuals and organizations interested in fostering leadership and collaboration in and among educational institutions.

I have enclosed a survey that requests three types of information including your views and experiences as a leader, your views and experiences about collaboration, and basic demographic information that will help construct a profile of the chief academic officers currently serving in New England community colleges. Because each chief academic officer has a personal story and unique set of views and experiences, it is especially important to have every chief academic officers in the New England region participate.

In addition to the survey, I am requesting face-to-face interviews with a small number of chief academic officers to discuss their survey responses in more depth. Please consider volunteering for this important aspect of the study. The interview would be arranged at your convenience and would not be longer than one hour in length.

For both the survey and interviews, all information you provide will be confidential. Neither your name nor facts that could identify you personally as a respondent will be provided in any public documents, including the dissertation. Participation is voluntary and the decision to participate or not to participate will in no way be prejudicial to you. If you have questions or concerns about participating, please don't hesitate to contact me. By completing the survey and returning it to me, your informed consent to participate in the study under the conditions described is assumed. Do not complete the survey or return it to me if you do not understand or agree to these conditions.

Please return the completed survey in the enclosed stamped, and self-addressed, reply envelope at your earliest convenience. In return for your participation, I will send you a summary of my findings, including the profile of the New England community college chief academic officers. Thank you very much for your time, your cooperation, and your contribution to this study.

Sincerely,

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APPENDIX B

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

December 5, 2004

Dear :

I am once again asking for your participation in a dissertation research project that I am working on under the direction of Dr. Pat Crosson in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The purpose of my study is to examine chief academic officers as leaders in community colleges and to explore their views on collaboration as a strategy for addressing common issues and problems. My research focus is on public community colleges in the New England region. Because I am working with a relatively small population, your input as a chief academic officer in New Hampshire is very important to my research design and analysis. *Please help me by returning the enclosed short-answer survey.*

All information you provide will be confidential. Neither your name nor any facts that could identify you personally as a respondent will be provided in any public documents, including the dissertation. Participation is voluntary and the decision to participate or not to participate will in no way be prejudicial to you. If you have questions or concerns about participating, please don't hesitate to contact me. By completing the survey and returning it to me, your informed consent to participate in the study under the conditions described is assumed. Do not complete the survey or return it to me if you do not understand or agree to these conditions.

I will send a summary of my findings, including a demographic profile of the chief academic officers in the New England region, to each respondent. As this is my final opportunity to request your assistance, I sincerely hope you will contribute your views and experiences to this study. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Pamela Edington
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APPENDIX C

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER SURVEY

The following 4 questions explore your views and experiences as a chief academic officer.

1. What three institutional priorities demand the most attention from you as a chief academic officer?

    1.

    2.

    3.

2. What institutional priority do you wish you could give more attention to?

3. What major impact have you had on a community college as a chief academic officer?

4. What gives you the greatest sense of accomplishment as a chief academic officer?

The following 5 questions explore your views and experiences with collaboration.

5. Do you consider collaboration with other community college chief academic officers to be valuable for addressing common problems?

____Yes. Why?

____No. Why not?

6. Do you collaborate with community college chief academic officers in your **state**?

____Yes. Please provide an example(s) of collaboration.

____No. Why not?

7. Do you collaborate with community college chief academic officers in the **New England region**?

____Yes. Please provide an example(s) of collaboration.

____No. Why not?

8. What factors **increase collaboration** among chief academic officers?

9. What factors **inhibit collaboration** among chief academic officers?

The following 10 questions ask for basic demographic information and will help construct a profile of the chief academic officers currently serving in the public community colleges in New England.

10. How many years of managerial experience (department head or higher) in higher education do you have? _____

11. How many years have you worked for your current employer? _____

12. How many years have you been employed in your current position? _____

13. What position did you hold immediately prior to becoming a chief academic officer?

_____

14. How many individuals report directly to you? _____

15. Please check the following areas that report to you as the chief academic officer?

____Non-credit courses ____Student activities ____Business & Industry ____Community education

16. _____Age

17. _____Gender

18. _____Race/Ethnicity

19. _____ Highest degree earned

20. Would you be willing, if contacted, to participate in a confidential interview to explore your responses to the survey in more depth? The interview would be scheduled at your convenience and would not be longer than one hour in length.

_____Yes _____Name _____Phone

_____Email

_____No.

Thank you for participating in this study and assisting me in this research.

Please return the completed survey in the enclosed reply envelope as soon as possible.

Pamela Edington
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APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Study of Chief Academic Officers In New England Community Colleges:
Perspectives on Leadership and Regional Collaboration

Consent for Voluntary Participation

I volunteer to participate in this qualitative study and understand that:

1. I will be interviewed by Pamela Edington as part of her doctoral dissertation research.

2. The questions I will be answering address my views on issues related to leadership of chief academic officers (CAOs) in community college. I understand that the primary purpose of this research is to increase understanding of the role of the chief academic officer and to investigate linkages between CAOs within the New England region. The information gathered in this study could result in better practice, more innovation, increased efficiencies, and better policy making for community colleges.

3. The interview will be tape recorded to facilitate analysis of the data.

4. My name will not be used, nor will I be identified personally in any way or at any time.

5. I may withdraw from part or all of this study at any time.

6. I have the right to review material prior to the final oral exam or other publication.

7. I understand that the results from this interview will be included in Pamela Edington's doctoral dissertation and may also be included in manuscripts submitted to professional journals for publication.

8. I am free to participate or not to participate without prejudice.

_____ _____

Researcher's Signature Date Participant's Signature Date

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The first questions explore your views and experiences as a chief academic officer.

What has it been like for you to be a chief academic officer in a community college?

How is being a chief academic officer different from your last position of dean?

How do you determine which institutional priorities to give the most attention to as the CAO?

Which of the institutional priorities that you give the most attention is the most interesting or fulfilling for you?

What would need to happen in order for you to give more attention to this priority?

What are the major resources you have as a CAO to affect change or to have an impact on your campus?

Can you describe for me a "high point" in your career as a chief academic officer?

The second set of questions explores your views and experiences with collaboration as a chief academic officer.

What kinds of problems or issues do you think lend themselves to collaboration between chief academic officers?

What opportunities have there been for you to meet and interact with chief academic offices within the New England region?

If there were opportunities for CAOs of the community colleges in New England to meet and discuss common problems, to what extent would you be interested in convening with them?

How is the availability of technology – the Internet, list serves, online chats, discussion boards, and etc. affecting collaboration?

APPENDIX F

NEW ENGLAND REGION PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Connecticut

Asnuntuck Community College	Enfield 06082
Capital Community College	Hartford 06105
Gateway Community College	New Haven 06511
Housatonic Community College	Bridgeport 06604
Manchester Community College	Manchester 06040
Middlesex Community College	Middletown 06457
Naugatuck Valley Community College	Waterbury 06708
Northwestern Connecticut Community College	Winsted 06098
Norwalk Community College	Norwalk 06854
Quinebaug Valley Community College	Danielson 06239
Three Rivers Community College	Norwich 06360
Tunxis Community College	Farmington 06032

Massachusetts

Berkshire Community College	Pittsfield 01201
Bristol Community College	Fall River 02720
Bunker Hill Community College	Charlestown 02129
Cape Cod Community College	W. Barnstable 02668
Greenfield Community College	Greenfield 01301
Holyoke Community College	Holyoke 01040

Massachusetts Bay Community College	Wellesley Hills02181
Massasoit Community College	Brockton 02302
Middlesex Community College	Bedford 01730
Mount Wachusett Community College	Gardner 01440
North Shore Community College	Danvers 01923
Northern Essex Community College	Haverhill 01830
Quinsigamond Community College	Worcester 01606
Roxbury Community College	Roxbury 02120
Springfield Technical Community College	Springfield 01101
Maine	
Central Maine Community College	Auburn 04210
Eastern Maine Community College	Bangor 04401
Kennebec Valley Community College	Fairfield 04937
Northern Maine Community College	Presque Isle 04769
Southern Maine Community College	South Portland 04106
Washington County Community College	Calais 04619
York County Community College	Wells 04090
New Hampshire	
N. H. Community Technical College, Berlin/Laconia	Berlin 03570
N. H. Community Technical College, Manchester/Stratham	Manchester 03102
	Stratham 03885
N.H. Community Technical College, Nashua/Claremont	Nashua 03063
	Claremont 03743

N.H. Community Technical Institute	Concord 03301
Rhode Island	
Community College of Rhode Island	Warwick 02886
Vermont	
Community College of Vermont	Waterbury 05676

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